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THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORM

by

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6

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This thesis is dedicated to
the memory of my Father,
Kenneth Van Wart, and to my
Mother, Francis Van Wart

ABSTRACT

In the history of the English-Canadian novel, Elizabeth Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and Sheila Watson's The Double Hook, and the novels of the poet-novelists A. M. Klein, Douglas LePan, Leonard Cohen, Margaret Atwood, and Michael Ondaatje (The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter) depart from the conventions of the realistic novel. In general, these novels provide new perspectives and new means towards the expression and the dramatization of experience and the penetration of inner reality. The success of these novels and their vitality exist in the manipulation and the integration of two different sets of standard conventions--those associated with fiction and those with poetry--to create a hybrid genre. They employ poetic methods to create fiction and recast narrative conventions to operate poetically; in short, they use the novel to approach the function of the poem.

Through the formal explication of individual texts, this thesis argues that the successful novels, Smart's By Grand Central Station, Watson's The Double Hook, Cohen's Beautiful Losers, Atwood's Surfacing, and Ondaatje's Coming Through Slaughter, make harmonious two different kinds of reader expectations associated with either poetry or fiction. Klein's The Second Scroll and LePan's The Deserter, however, fail to integrate the antithetical expectations and create, instead, interesting experiments in form. What these poet-novelists create is a new category or "genre" in English-Canadian fiction--the poem-novel.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: THE POET AS NOVELIST

> To study writing, and especially literary modes of writing, one must concentrate on the conventions which guide the play of differences and the process of constructing meanings.
>
> Jonathan Cullers, Structuralist Poetics

I

Formal experimentation in English-Canadian fiction manifests itself curiously but clearly during the fifties and sixties in the novels of poets A. M. Klein, Douglas LePan, and Leonard Cohen. In Klein's The Second Scroll (1951), LePan's The Deserter (1964), and Cohen's Beautiful Losers (1966), the thematic concerns of a considerable body of poetry find new technical emphasis as these writers confront the conventions of narrative prose fiction, in particular the conventions associated with the realism so firmly established in the English-Canadian novel up to this time.[1] The later novels of poets Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje, Surfacing (1972) and Coming Through Slaughter (1976), continue more radically in this direction.

The move to fiction and narrative structures on the part of these poets can be viewed as the natural culmination of a search for a longer, more complex form to express the personal perceptions and visionary states of their poetry, to recreate in their fiction the essence of subjective or inner experience. While they maintain clear contact with novelistic practice through the creation of character, the cause and effect progression of plot, and time-bound sequences and settings, they refashion these conventions to a poetic function. They do so, first of all, by utilizing the externality of the novelistic format in order to explore the complexities of subjective consciousness more concretely. Secondly, instead of creating character according to principles of external and psychological verisimilitude, dialogue that approximates actual speech, or plots, actions, and themes that reproduce the sociological and psychological preoccupations of the middle-class majority, the poet-novelists manipulate these elements into intricate verbal structures with a primarily aesthetic rather than mimetic (or referential) intention and effect.

In so doing, the poets Klein, LePan, Cohen, Atwood, and Ondaatje not only extend the formal and thematic aspects of their poetry in the writing of their fiction, but they extend the thematic and formal possibilities of the English-Canadian novel as well. If their work fulfills the expectations of the novel form, it does so in new ways, particularly in the kind and degree of organization and formalization of their fictional structures and also in the stylization of their language. In effect, what these writers are attempting to do is to utilize and make harmonious two different sets of seemingly antithetical conventions and reader expectations, those associated with the novel and those associated with poetry. The purpose of this study is to show through formal explication of the poets' novels how each of these works create new novel expectations and to evaluate their success in attempting to make harmonious the two different kinds of reader expectations of poetry and fiction.

II

The initial justification for selecting a body of fiction that appropriates both the poetic and the narrative modes of discourse is provided by literary theorists who address the relevant critical concerns. The specific manner for approaching an analysis is offered by the descriptive methods of Jonathan Culler and Jan Mukařovský.[2] Culler distinguishes genre and its mode of discourse as a series of conventions that raise specific reader expectations and responses while Mukarovský distinguishes between poetic language and standard literary language and the respective function of each. These critics not only provide basic generic identification essential to a critical examination of such cross-genre experiments as those of the poet-novelists, they also point to conscious deviations from standard genre and language expectations. Ralph Freedman's discussion of the lyrical novel and Réjean Robidoux's and André Rénaud's study of the French-Canadian novel in the twentieth century also provide a specific critical vocabulary for the type of fiction under discussion. Robidaux's and Renaud's refinement on Freedman's term "lyrical novel" into "poetic novel" and "poem-novel" provide applicable and appropriate terms for the analysis and evaluation of the chosen works.

Essentially, the distinctions between poetry and prose as modes of discourse based on classifications of meter, theories of cadence, or an ornamental and figurative language are superficial ones.[3] In his study, Structuralist Poetics, Jonathan Culler determines ~~the~~ differences between poetry and prose as those of convention. He says the function of genre conventions is "to establish a contract between writer and reader so as to make certain relevant expectations operative and thus to permit both compliance with and deviation from accepted modes of intelligibility."[4] Culler significantly points out:

> The expectations enshrined in the conventions of genre are, of course, violated. Their function, like that of all constitutive rules, is to make meaning possible by providing terms in which to classify the things one encounters. What is made intelligible by the conventions of genre is often less interesting than that which resists or escapes generic understanding, and so it should be no surprise that there arises, over and against the vraisemblance of genre, another level of vraisemblance whose fundamental device is to expose the artifice of generic conventions and expectations.[5]

More particularly, Culler says the difference between poetry and prose lies in "the conventional expectation, of the type of attention poetry receives by virtue of its status within the institution of literature":

> To analyse poetry from the point of view of poetics is to specify what is involved in these conventional expectations which make poetic language subject to a different teleology or finality from that of ordinary speech and how these expectations or conventions contribute to the effect of formal devices and of the external contexts that poetry assimilates.[6]

In other words, Culler suggests that it is convention which triggers certain reader expectations and that the identification of poetry is a "process of finding ways to grant it significance and importance."[7] He maintains that the reading process is one in which "we call upon a variety of operations which have come to form part of the institution of poetry."[8] Certain standard conventions of poetry guide the reading of it along with more specific and local ones. Thus, he says, poetry's distinction resides in its resistance to immediate intelligence, "not necessarily the resistance of obscurity, but at least the resistance of semantic patterns and forms whose semiotic relevance is not immediately obvious."[9] A poem brings into play "a new set of expectations, a set of conventions determining how the sequence is to be read and what kind of interpretations may be derived from it."[10]

On the other hand, Culler states, "the novel is the primary semiotic agent of 'intelligibility'":

> Words must be composed in such a way that through the activity of reading there will emerge a model of the social world, models of the individual personality, of the relations between individuals and society, and, perhaps most important, of the kind of significance which these aspects of the world can bear. . . .[11]

The novel, then, has a representational or mimetic orientation and relies on the link between the text and ordinary experience (what Culler calls "narrative contracts") unlike poetry which functions as an atemporal, organic whole:

> Precisely because the reader expects to be able to recognize a world, the novel he reads becomes a place in which models of intelligibility can be 'deconstructed,' exposed and challenged. In poetry, deviations from the *vraisemblable* are easily recuperated as metaphors which should be translated or as moments of visionary or prophetic stance; but in the novel, conventional expectations make such deviations more troubling and therefore potentially more powerful. . . .[12]

In effect, the deviations from conventional expectations are determined by a rule-governed process of producing meaning based, in particular, on conventions of language usage. The act of literary communication is, in fact, one of convention and can take place only through certain implied agreements between the writer and the reader about the meaning and the nature of words, about topography and pagination, or chapter division, or cause and effect in narration, or about the sound, syntax, and ordering of words and the structuring of thoughts in a poem. Culler says:

> Choices between words, between sentences, between different modes of presentation, will be made on the basis of their effects; and the notion of effect presupposes modes of reading which are not random or haphazard.[13]

These effects are a part of a connotative system that accumulate in literature diachronically; that is, their meaning derives from earlier works; however, it also derives from the function of the language in a particular mode of discourse. In an essay on poetic language, Jan Mukařovský distinguishes between standard literary language and poetic language. He defines standard literary language as "that which constitutes the background against which the linguistic aspect of the poetic work is perceived: it is precisely the deviations from standard literary language which are elevated by poetry and artistic device."[14] According to Mukařovský, poetic language is not characterized by one single property:

> Poetic language is permanently characterized only by its function; however, function is not a property but a mode of utilizing the properties of a given phenomenon. Poetic language belongs among the numerous other functional languages, each of which is an adaptation of a linguistic system to a certain goal of expression. Aesthetic effect is the goal of poetic expression. However, the aesthetic function, which thus dominates in poetic language (being only a concomitant phenomenon in other functional languages), concentrates attention on the linguistic sign itself--hence it is exactly the opposite of a practical orientation toward a goal which in language is communication.[15]

Mukařovský's point is that poetic discourse, which has aesthetic effect as its aim, does not deprive poetry of its practical import, but further works to revive the reader's awareness of language itself, and the relation of language to reality. In standard literary language (as in expository, or narrative prose) a metaphor aims to bring the subject closer to the audience, or to drive a point home; in poetry it serves to intensify the aesthetic effect as well. Further, in poetic discourse, rather than translating the unfamiliar into terms of the familiar, the poetic image functions to make the habitual strange by placing it in an unexpected context.[16] In other words, in poetic discourse, attention is more or less concentrated on the sign, i.e., the word itself; the semantic relation of every word to the surrounding context comes to the foreground, whereas in narrative prose, the main emphasis lies in its denotative significance, or in the relation of the word to that which the word signifies, or its social and physical context. Furthermore, Mukařovský points out:

> In poetic designations neither the pole of literal meaning nor the pole of figurative meaning prevails in principle; rather an equilibrium is the rule, although this equilibrium is usually strained and oscillates between the two opposed tendencies toward these poles.[17]

Thus, according to Culler and Mukařovský, language works in relation to context and form; however, Mukařovský points out (as Culler intimates):

> In some periods (and also in some literary genres) a considerable convergence of poetic language and the standard literary language may take place so that the impression of the deviation of poetic expression almost vanishes, and poetic genres stand undifferentiated in close proximity to the communicative genres of literature.[18]

Both Culler and Mukařovský, then, point to conscious derivations from genre and language expectations that occur when one form and/or language appropriates the resources of another. When this occurs such hybrid genres are characterized by the interaction and more significantly the fusion of two modes, the poetic mode and the narrative mode. The interaction and the fusion of these two modes in the novel tend to produce hybrid novels which transcend the formal characteristics of or distinctions between poetry and prose. As in the poem, there is a concentration on language and aesthetic effect, but unlike a poem, such works retain the narrative demands of fiction.

At the same time, it is important to note that in terms of definition and intention the narrative and the poetic mode are different, even antithetical. The conventions of narrative work to suggest story and story-telling; they concern themselves with character and events usually connected by cause and effect association and by temporal boundaries. The conventions of the poem, on the other hand, are bound neither by causality nor temporality; rather, they create the organization or patterning of discrete elements (images, scenes, events, passages, words, etc.) around an unspoken center, and suggest pictorial patterns created through image and metaphor. Sound, syntax, the spatial ordering of words, and structuring of thoughts are integral elements of the poem's total effect. This is compounded by the effect of the techniques at the poet's disposal which converge upon the 'word' in order to throw into relief its complex structure and its density. Its movement is atemporal, from image to image, following its own progression through variation and expansion of themes and changes in rhythm to a point of intensity.

Contrarily, the movement of narrative has a representational and mimetic orientation and a teological structure in which each segment gains significance by its correlation with other segments to create a specifically unified outcome. In narrative prose fiction, reality is conventionally structured not only in particular characters and events, but initially in the words from which the author creates character, situation, and event; but a novel is remembered not as a system of words, or images, symbols, and sounds, but rather as a system of actions, situations, and characters, concepts abstracted from the accumulation of messages through language. The crucial difference, then, between a narrative and a poetic mode exists in the kind and degree of organization or formalization of its conventions and its stylization of language. These differences have a direct bearing on the texture and overall structure of a work; furthermore, they tend to invite different kinds of reading processes; they create different expectations and, consequently, result in different kinds of reading experiences.[19]

What distinguishes novels that appropriate the poetic mode for narrative intentions, then, is an internal tension created by the precarious balance of different, even antithetical techniques. Instead of creating the narrative thrust of the story through characters and dramatic action, they aim for the aesthetic effect of poetry. Yet, more than this, they translate narrative conventions to poetic function and assume a unique form that transcends the causal and temporal movement of fiction.

In his full-length study of "the lyrical novel," Ralph Freedman defines the novel that appropriates the resources of lyrical poetry as a lyrical novel. He says that on the most elementary level it contains the basic elements of the lyric: "the expression of feelings in musical or pictorial patterns, shifting from experience to a highly formal design where the usual scenery of fiction becomes a texture of imagery and the characters appear as _personae_ for the self."[20] Freedman says that in the lyrical novel, there is generally an attempt to combine man and world in an inward, yet aesthetically objective form, to absorb action, and to depict characters by fashioning them through patterns of imagery. This, he says, is its decisive difference from the traditional novel:

> A decisive difference between the two forms, [however,] is the locus of that world. In conventional narratives, the outer world is the thing. It is placed beyond both writer and reader, interposing between them and the theme. In the lyrical novel, such a world is conceived, not as a universe in which men display their actions, but as a poet's vision fashioned by design.[21]

Freedman contends that the complexity of the lyrical novel lies in its perspective since the demands of the narrative create the "I" also as an experiencing protagonist. Consequently, the experiences of the world which in a conventional novel are produced by social circumstance, cause and effect, and chronology are now refashioned as patterns through the disposition of poetic techniques: the poetic or lyrical process expands as it is simultaneously turned into an epistemological act. That is, the "I" is both a lyrical and an experiential "I." Thus, what is finally important in such a novel is the way reality is created.[22]

A further helpful study that provides a finer distinction in definition and kind, for novels that appropriate the poetic mode, is Réjean Robidoux's and André Rénaud's study of the French-Canadian novel in the twentieth century.[23] Unlike the English novel (where the tradition of realism is firmly embedded and few novels stand conspicuously outside the tradition of realism),[24] there is a general propensity among the French-Canadian writers of the sixties on to keep a definite distance from so-called traditional techniques and style. Robidoux and Rénaud argue that the French-Canadian novel developed through what always appear to be a series of efforts to resolve problems of style. They also argue that the vitality of the French-Canadian novel is found in the diverse and often divergent use of radical methods to go beyond certain aesthetic limits that until recently were prescribed by the traditional forms and conventions of the novel. Robidoux and Rénaud suggest that the major shift is in the style and language as an expression of the personal vision of the novelist; the primary concern is with formal creation:

> Ce qui importe avant tout au créateur n'est pas ce que la réalité lui impose mais ce qu'il dicte lui-même à la réalité par les moyens qui lui sont propres et qu'il ne se fait pas scrupule de forcer, au besoin, et de torturer: le langage et tout particulièrement la composition et l'écriture, en ce qui concerne le romancier.[25]

They call this process a "poetic one" in the strict sense of the word poïein (to make or create). Unlike Freedman, Robidoux and Rénaud distinguish between what they call "le roman-poeme" (poem-novel), a novel which not only tells a story but creates its own form in the process, and "le roman poetique" (poetic novel), a novel which depends on imagistic and musical patterns, but where the structure and overall composition, both temporal and spatial, are to a large extent based on the realistic postulate (novels such as Margaret Laurence's A Jest of God, or Leonard Cohen's The Favourite Game). A poem-novel may also be poetic (i.e., take on the characteristics of poetry), but also it creates its own structure rather than imposing one from the preconceived structures of the narrative tradition.[26]

III

In the English-Canadian canon of fiction, there are two early works by novelists who are not poets which stand outside the predominating realistic tradition and function in the manner of what Robidoux and Rénaud describe as the poem-novel. These novels are Elizabeth Smart's By Grand

Central Station I Sat Down and Wept (1945) and Sheila Watson's The Double Hook (1959). Significantly, in each novel there is an appropriation by one form of the resources of another. In By Grand Central Station, an emblematic language created through the poetic devices of conceit, hyperbole, allusion, and metaphor expresses the experience it contains; that is, it refashions the narrative structures of the novel to become an internal lyrical expression of one quality of mind and soul isolated in love from the rest of human experience. In Watson's The Double Hook, the rhetorical tools of narrative translate to complex symbolic function through the interplay and patterning of the concrete elemental images of nature. The symbolic ramifications of the motifs of imagery create a pattern of stasis and action, of sterility and rebirth as they dramatize psychological and physical rebirth literally and symbolically in a tightly symbolic form. In By Grand Central Station, a subjective and metaphoric vision of love transcends spatial and temporal boundaries; in The Double Hook, a symbolic pattern of rebirth determines the literal and the concrete. Although each novel contains a concrete and particular novelistic framework, it does so within a design rendered in the manner of a poem. Hence, By Grand Central Station and The Double Hook invite new reading experiences as they alter the expectations associated with the novel form: the reader needs to bring to these novels the same sensitivity to verbal patterns and alertness to the nuance of words and language as the reader brings to poetry. In essence, these novels provide paradigmatic examples of Robidoux's and Rénaud's conception of the poem-novel in the English-Canadian novel; they may also be seen as the literary progenitors of the poets' novels The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter.

In his study of the development of a poetic tradition in English Canadian literature, Tom Marshall points out there is a tradition of poets writing fiction in English Canada; for example, Roberts's animal stories, P. K. Page's romantic tales, and John Glassco's erotica, to name a few.[27] As well, poets such as Earle Birney, Raymond Souster, and Elizabeth Brewster have written conventional novels that exist in the mainstream of the realistic tradition.[28] More significant to the present study is Marshall's identification of the phenomenon of the poet-novelist. In his seminal chapter on "the poet-novelist" he contends that the particular poets Klein, LePan, Cohen, Atwood, and Ondaatje were seeking to extend themselves in their novels, "to rediscover the largeness and scope of Pratt who remains a somewhat ambiguous monument in the ancestral past, in new ways appropriate to their time."[29] Marshall identifies and validates this important area of critical investigation as an interesting aspect in the development of a Canadian poetic tradition wherein he sees the fiction of these poets as an adjunct to their poetry. My own interest is in the experiments with fictional forms *per se*, and how these achievements may be analyzed and judged according to appropriate theories and models of fiction. This I will attempt to do by establishing similarities between the aforementioned novels of the poet-novelists and the models provided by the novelists Smart and Watson.

In the poet's novels *The Second Scroll*, *The Deserter*, *Beautiful Losers*, *Surfacing*, and *Coming Through Slaughter*, there is the same preoccupation with language and form as there is in the novels *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept* and *The Double Hook*. Generally speaking, as in the manner of these models, the poets' novels provide new perspectives and new means toward the expression and dramatization of experience, where the manner of the presentation of the experience functions in the specific terms of the novel's meaning. For example, in the novels of the earlier poets, Klein and LePan, the search for a viable myth of redemption (a major preoccupation of both in their poetry) is reiterated and made more powerful in The Second Scroll and The Deserter. Klein's novel is, in fact, an early attempt to extend the language of poetry into prose fiction. In The Deserter, Douglas LePan relies heavily on images not only to convey or express an experience or an emotion but also as a central structural and unifying device within the novel. Cohen's preoccupation with the separation between the spirit and the flesh finds a more powerful expression in Beautiful Losers where the thematic expression of separation is dramatized by characters who embody the novel's predominating and unifying symbols. Similarly, the concern with the fragmentation between the inner and outer life suggested in Atwood's poetry translates to the central metaphor of her novel Surfacing; in Surfacing metaphoric representation develops the thematic pattern and functions as a formal structuring device. And, finally, poetic techniques originating in Ondaatje's first extended poem, the man with seven toes, and developed in his narrative poem, The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, find more complex function in Coming Through Slaughter where the subject, the poet, and the medium are integrated in the complex use of image.

More specifically, the poet's novels The Deserter and Surfacing may be aligned with Smart's novel By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept: their narrative structures depend not on the conventional development of plot and characterization, but upon the particular function of image and metaphor for the expression of their themes and the formulation of their structures. On the other hand, The Second Scroll and Beautiful Losers, like Watson's The Double Hook, depend specifically on the thematic and formal manipulation of symbol. And Ondaatje's novel extends both the metaphoric representations of Smart's, LePan's, and Atwood's novels, and the symbolic patterning of Watson's, Klein's, and Cohen's novels. He literally fragments the narrative line and its linear structure by the enjambment of time, place, and voice to depict the fragmentation of a personality between a private and public life. Unlike Smart's or Watson's use of images that shift into metaphoric or symbolic meaning, in Coming Through Slaughter image functions to dramatize the poetic process itself. In each of these novels, there is a shift from the referential and the causal to the aesthetic; that is, formal patterning or design predominates over the representational conventions for the creation of character and incident. Further, there is a close identity between the language of the novels and their style and form since it is the manipulation of poetic language and techniques that orders experience into coherent patterns. Their essence lies not in the representation of life, but in the correlation between subjective experience and the poet's individual expression of it.

IV

The point of this thesis is to demonstrate that the poet-novelists A. M. Klein, Douglas LePan, Leonard Cohen, Margaret Atwood, and Michael Ondaatje in their novels The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter manipulate and accommodate two different sets of standard conventions, those associated with fiction and those with poetry, to create a hybrid genre in the

English-Canadian novel. My procedure will be first to explicate Elizabeth Smart's novel By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and Sheila Watson's novel The Double Hook as paradigmatic examples which establish the identity of two types of "poem-novels" according to the generic terms outlined by Robidoux and Rénaud and the theoretical basis for genre investigation established by Culler and Mukarōvský.

This initial procedure is offered as the practical basis for the explication and evaluation for the novels of the poet-novelists under consideration. Each work will be judged on the success of the poet-novelist to make harmonious the antithetical modes of discourse as identified by Culler and Mukařovský. I will argue first that each of these novels to some degree extends the parameters of narrative prose in English-Canadian fiction and provides new reading experiences because each one creates new strategies for the expression and dramatization of experience; and second that, in creating a hybrid genre that engages the poetic mode for narrative intentions, they help secure the English-Canadian novel as a flexible form capable of evolutionary changes in style and structure. Their achievement is a mark of the continuing vitality of the English Canadian novel because it both challenges and exploits the predominant conservatism of English-Canadian fictional realism.

CHAPTER TWO

ELIZABETH SMART'S BY GRAND CENTRAL STATION I SAT DOWN AND WEPT AND SHEILA WATSON'S THE DOUBLE HOOK: THE NOVELIST AS POET

> "What I was concerned with was figures in a ground from which they could not be separated."
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> Sheila Watson, "What I'm Going to Do," Sheila Watson: Open Letter, 3.1 (Winter, 1974)

Elizabeth Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and Sheila Watson's The Double Hook are paradigmatic poem-novels; they exist in the innovative tradition of the poets' novels The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter. Although Smart's and Watson's novels are radically different in content, style, and structure, as novels they are bound by the conventions of that genre; that is, the representation of patterns of experience based on an external reality and reflecting an interaction with the world of daily affairs.[1] Unique to each novel are the means by which Smart and Watson create these patterns of experience since in both novels a poetic mode transcends the disposition of language into paragraph or stanza form. Interestingly, neither Smart nor Watson comes to the novel by the way of poetry although both writers are essentially poets writing in the novel form. It is both poetic sensibility and the exploitation of poetic techniques and language that compel these novels to stand outside the tradition of realism in the English-Canadian novel.

In their novels, Smart and Watson depend on the novelistic format to explore subjective consciousness and personal vision concretely. To do this, they refashion narrative as poetry and adapt the traditional conventions of the novel to poetic function. In By Grand Central Station, the external world of daily affairs filters through the idiosyncratic first person consciousness of the narrator as she translates the changing nuances of her love affair into an experience of archetypal and universal significance. The emphasis in the novel is not on external action and event, but on the interior world of feeling and the imaginative transformation of external reality into subjective phenomena. Subjective sensations subsume objective reality as the narrator's feelings change from those of euphoria in the face of new love, to those of guilt following its consummation, and finally to the despair of betrayal when her lover leaves her to return to his wife. However, the complex emotional drama is anchored to the concrete external world so that the highly sensitive consciousness of the first person narrator creates an ironic dual perspective between objective and subjective reality. To convey this dual perspective and the increasing gap between subjective consciousness and the external world, Smart creates a poetic language of intense feeling and counterpoints it with the mundane and clichéd language of the external world. Rather than representing experience as an imitation of action, the subjective first person narrator refashions experience as image and metaphor that functions not as plot, but as a series of revelations which create the novel's narrative progression. At the same time, the narrator identifies and aligns her feelings, through allusions, to the heroic ideals of mythical love and suffering, thus elevating her personal feelings to the world of art. In By Grand Central Station, an emblematic language creates the metaphoric transformations of the experience the novel contains.

In Sheila Watson's The Double Hook, a limited omniscient point of view achieves a complex vision of man rooted in the particular in a manner that also evokes universal significance. A tightly integrated motif of images operating as metaphor and symbol creates a particularized and regional world, and at the same time an elemental and universal one. Symbols, such as the primary one of the double hook, play a central and directive role in the novel, while the elemental images of nature determine the narrative movement, a progression from stasis to regeneration. Watson roots her story in the particular and regional (the Cariboo County of British Columbia), yet she also converts both the internal landscape of the characters and their outer world into a symbolic structure within a Christian and Amerindian tradition of regeneration.

Both Smart and Watson utilize language to specific aesthetic ends. Smart's language is rhetorical, figurative, and allusive; a tortured and convoluted syntax conveys the obsessive state of the first person narrator as she interprets, distorts, and magnifies her personal experience in the face of an uncaring and brutal objective world. The rhetorical devices of zeugma and metalepsis, the poetic devices of conceit and hyperbole, and a motif of images of blood and water structure the narrative, integrating the concrete with the abstract, the banal with the sublime, and the temporal with the universal into a final aesthetic form which transcends the causal and the temporal movement of the narrative.

In contrast, Watson's language is contracted and elliptical: ambiguous pronouns, incomplete sentences, and unconventional syntax create a sense of dislocated and individual isolation. The narrative movement within the novel from paralysis to action and regeneration occurs in the interplay and the patterning of the concrete and elemental images of nature while the symbolic ramifications of the imagery reinforce the structural pattern of stasis and renewal. Watson develops a language rooted in the concrete image, one that articulates a universal reality and one that dramatizes psychological and physical rebirth literally and symbolically in a tightly patterned and symbolic form.

The originality and the vitality of By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and The Double Hook rest in the specific means by which they move beyond the aesthetic limits determined by traditional novel conventions. The shift in emphasis from the referential and the mimetic to the aesthetic in these novels is a shift to an emphasis on style and language for the expression of personal vision. In effect, a poetic mode subsumes a narrative one while the means towards the expression of experience is completely in accordance with the meaning that the novel expresses. In By Grand Central Station, Smart refashions the narrative into a lyrical process that transcends the spatial and the temporal; in The Double Hook, Sheila Watson recasts narrative conventions to poetic function as she integrates experiential and symbolic patterns of event. By formal analysis of the two texts, I will demonstrate that Smart and Watson make harmonious the poetic and the narrative mode and in so doing utilize the reader's expectations so that the reading experience is new and satisfying. Both works are poetic novels, yet, further, in their manipulation of language and form to specific aesthetic ends, they are paradigmatic poem-novels.

II

In her foreword to By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, Brigid Brophy heralds the novel as one of the "half dozen masterpieces of poetic prose in the world." Its mastery, she says, is a "mastery of metaphor."[2] Metaphor is, in fact, central to the work and signifies metamorphosis as the power of love transforms ordinary experience into an apocalyptic vision of love based on the narrator's declaration, "there is no reality but love."[3] The novel evokes a world of literary and legendary characters as images, metaphors, and allusions metamorphose into each other creating a poetic language that resonates with love's power and emotion. Smart relies intrinsically on doctrinaire Christianity for her images and her mythology; she also relies on the literary world of Rilke, Blake, and the metaphysical poets Donne and Herbert in order to align what might be considered an ordinary affair with the heroic ideals of love. In this way, she creates a world that transcends the concrete, ordinary world as it moves outward to encompass all love and all lovers' hope and despair. In effect, love is the stimulus that creates the metaphoric changes; love is therefore the catalyst which creates the narrative.

Smart's novel departs from the mimetic or behavioral novel in that the usual signposts of fiction function obliquely. Brophy says, "the story goes scarcely beyond the bare three lines of a love triangle, and even those have to be inferred from the narrator's rhapsodizing or lamentation over them."[4] The events and the action within the novel are presented peripherally; that is, they are deflected off feelings, located as Mallinson says at "the intersection of the figures of speech."[5]

Similarly, although time and place are established specifically, they are important only in relation to the narrator's feeling. The time, which is that of the second world war, is important only in that, ironically, the narrator sees her love as more powerful than the power of war. She says:

> So I say now, for the record of my own self, and to remember when I may be other than I am now: In spite of everything so strong in dissuasion, so rampant in disapproval, I saw then that there was nothing else anywhere but this one thing; that neither nunneries nor Pacific Islands nor jungles nor all the jazz of America nor the frenzy of warzones could hide any corner which housed an ounce of consolation if this failed. In all states of being, in all worlds, this is all there is. (p. 72)

In the same way, the various settings within the novel, California, New York, Arizona, and Ottawa, superficially link the narrative but only as backdrops for the emotional drama that unfolds in the heart of the narrator. Although the journey taken by the unnamed narrator and her lover is an actual one from the southern coast of California to Arizona, and to New York, the real journey is in the heart. Place acts as a correlative to the narrator's internal state; for instance, the consummation of the love affair occurs in the lush Californian landscape and her lover's betrayal takes place against the cheap hotels and cafés of New York. And, although the narrator and her lover are the central characters of the novel, he is only a point of reference while the narrator is a lyrical voice, an isolated soul suffering the ecstasy and pain of love. The other characters in the novel are but voices counterpointing the narrator's and the real drama is that which exists in the soul unfolding in the extravagantly hyperbolic and emblematic language.

Structurally the novel is divided into ten sections; each section reveals a further progression in the understanding of love, faith, and the nature of betrayal. Within each section, these accumulating revelations progress less through event than through association, contrast, and paradox encompassing the polarities of good and evil, glory and ruin, ecstasy and despair, life and death. Love is an active force; it is both spiritual and sexual, specific and universal; it is the purveyor of both life and death. Thus, revelation structured in paradox, not plot, creates the narrative progression of By Grand Central Station.

The bare fictional line in the novel takes the narrator through a series of events beginning with her first meeting with her lover and his wife and ending with his betrayal of her. As the events unfold, the narrator has an increasing perception of a mundane, banal, and external world indifferent to love. Yet, ironically, it is this world against which she establishes her heroic ideals of love. Smart creates both an inner landscape of love and passion and a concrete external world of objects that anchor and define the personal force of love. By placing the inner world of the narrator's feelings against the external world, Smart creates a pervasive pattern throughout the novel, an alternating sense of concentration and extravagance, of the concrete and the universal, a pattern that is established in the opening paragraph. As the narrator waits on a corner in Monterey for the bus which carries the man she loves, she says, "apprehension and the summer afternoon keep drying my lips, prepared at ten-minute intervals all through the five hour wait" (p. 17). The abstraction of "apprehension" is paired with the concrete "summer afternoon" and "five hour wait," a contrast that is repeated in the next paragraph when she is unexpectantly confronted with the man's wife: "It is her eyes that come forward out of the vulgar disembarkers to reassure me that the bus has not gorged disaster" (p. 17). Again, the juxtapositioning of a concrete and an abstract word is repeated in the third paragraph:

> Behind her he for whom I have waited so long, who has stalked so unbearably through my nightly dreams, fumbles with the tickets and the bags, and shuffles up to the event which too much anticipation has fingered to shreds. (p. 17)

The contrast between the concrete image of "the tickets and the bags" with the generality of the "event" and ominous bodings of "apprehension" creates an alternating pattern of concentration and extravagance, a pattern that underlines the pervasive sense of two worlds juxtaposed and in conflict. The gap between these two worlds is structurally reinforced by Smart's particular use of language, a language which determines the distance and the difference between the two worlds in conflict. A tightly sustained first person monologue, what Lorraine McMullen calls "a language of feeling--subjective, passionate, and extravagant," exists in ironic tension to the intruding language of the external world.[6] It is the contrast between the narrator's language of the soul and that of the intruding world that is central to the novel's theme, style and structure. Further, as Jean Mallinson points out, the reader of By Grand Central Station feels the experience "apprehended and suffered through language"; in fact, "it happens as language in recognizable and often formal ways . . . ."[7] Mallinson says Elizabeth Smart employs "a wide range of figurative language, but there are three tropes which govern the structure, style and meaning of the work. . . ."[8]

Specifically, Smart's use of the rhetorical and figurative devices of metalepsis, zeugma, hyperbole, conceit, and image motifs define the language of the soul and determine the novel's lyrical or poetic mode. As Mallinson points out, metalepsis is the novel's dominating and central trope, "the trope of allusion used not incidentally but pervasively and as an element in structure."[9] It is this metaleptic trope that links the world of the novel with the Biblical world of Babylon and more specifically links the Biblical love in exile with the world of Grand Central Station. The allusion to "Psalm 137" recalls the exiled people of Zion; significantly, the narrator finds herself exiled through love in an alien and material world, and further exiled from love itself when her lover abandons her in New York in order to return to his wife, out of pity. In fact, the novel is about love in exile, but by associating this love with that of the Biblical love it encompasses a whole tradition, an idealized and literary past. Further, although it is "Psalm 137" which provides the metaleptic term of reference, it is the Biblical "Song of Songs" which provides the frame for the novel by explicitly drawing into sharp and ironic conjunction the visionary love (with which the narrator aligns her love) and the external world's antithetical view of it. Smart explicitly counterpoints the lyrical "Song of Songs" with the brutal police interrogation the narrator suffers after having been caught committing adultery with her love in the state of Arizona:

> But at the Arizona border they stopped us and said Turn Back, and I sat in a little room with barred windows while they typed.
>
> What relation is this man to you? (My beloved is mine and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.)
>
> How long have you known him? (I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.)
>
> Did you sleep in the same room? (Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair: thou hast dove's eyes.)
>
> In the same bed? (Behold thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant, also our bed is green.)
>
> Did intercourse take place? (I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste.)
>
> When did intercourse first take place? (The king hath brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love.)

> Were you intending to commit fornication in Arizona? (He shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.)
>
> Behold thou art fair my beloved, behold thou art fair: thou hast dove's eyes. (pp. 51-52)

The sharp irony of the scene illustrates the contrast between the banality of the policeman's hostile questions and the profundity of the narrator's feelings by explicitly counterpointing the two discourses within the novel, and thus reinforcing the novel's metaleptic frame.

Connected to the trope of metalepsis and working in relation to it is zeugma, "a figure by which things very different or contrary are compared or placed together and by which they mutually set off and enhance each other."[10] Zeugma is central in locking discordant pairs in the novel, signified specifically in its title. Hence, the twentieth-century image of Grand Central Station suggests Biblical Babylon; it is the song of Eros or "The Song of Songs" sung in a material and alien world. The title of the novel recalls the exiled people of Zion with the words, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."[11] As Mallinson says, "it emphasizes the plight of love in a world that does not speak love's language,"[12] again made explicit in the contrast between the archaic language and the sensuous world evoked in the "Song of Songs" as the narrator's response to the hostile police investigation. Mallinson says, in this world, "love is just another four-lettered word."[13]

A third and extensive trope that dominates the tone of the novel is hyperbole. Mallinson speaks of "the hyperbole of hysteria, the frantic devising of extravagant messages for a world which turns a deaf ear."[14] Hyperbole is both appropriate and effective in creating the intensity of the narrator's obsessive and passionate love.

She reiterates her conviction of the boundless powers of love in extravagant terms. For example, she attributes apocalyptic significance to the consummation of their love: "The stream of our kiss put a waterway around the world, where love like a refugee sailed in the last ship" (p. 36). Similarly, the narrator expresses her guilt in an extravagant pun unconsciously revealing her reactions to her lover's betrayed wife:

> On her mangledness I am spreading my amorous sheets, but who will have any pride in the wedding red, seeping up between the thighs of love which rise like a colossus, but whose issue is only the cold semen of grief. (p. 34)

Hyperbole works also in conjunction with conceit to express the shame the narrator is made to feel by a puritanical and hypocritical morality:

> Not God, but bats and a spider who is weaving my guilt, keeps the rendezvous with me, and shame copulates with every September housefly. (p. 34)

In fact, hyperbole and conceit are the "language of love" as it moves outward to embrace all of nature, as when the narrator asserts, "I am the land, and he is the face upon the waters. He is the moon upon the tides, the dew, the rain, all the seeds and all the honey of love" (p. 42). The language of love speaks in the extremes where hope and despair know no middle ground, yet, nonetheless, it is sung in an alien and hostile world. In short, it is the language of lyrical poetry; it evokes a world where "nothing is neutral," events and actions take on mythic significance, the central characters translate into archetypes, and the prosaic details of life turn into signs and emblems that affirm or deny love. The narrator asserts, "there is no angle the world can assume which the love in my eye cannot make into a symbol of love" (p. 41).

To define and reinforce her vision of love, the narrator turns to and embraces mythical, Biblical, and literary traditions. In the mythical, Biblical, and literary world, love and suffering are viewed in heroic terms contrasting to the particular world's view where "the very word love offends with its nudity." Consistent allusions throughout the text to mythical and literary traditions reinforce and further the metaleptic framework and create an associative pattern which thematically and structurally unifies the novel. Specific allusions function as an integral part of the narrator's mind while they delineate her internal struggle as she experiences the vicissitudes of love; in fact, she says, her thoughts are "archives full of archetypes." Initially she begins by aligning herself with the legendary characters of Leda and Daphne whose own legendary transformations into other forms were the consequence of amorous pursuits. The narrator and her lover are thus projected into the world of myth as archetypes of love; they take on mythic significance and because their love is thus inextricably wound into legend, they become, in turn, a part of the legends. The progression of their love is written in the legends:

> It is written. Nothing can escape. Floating through the waves with seaweed in my hair, or being washed up battered on the inaccessible rocks, cannot undo the event to which there were never any alternatives. O lucky Daphne, motionless and green to avoid the touch of a god! Lucky Syrinx, who chose a legend instead of too much blood. For me there was no choice. There were no crossroads at all. (pp. 23-24)

Immediately following the consummation of their love, the narrator thinks, "Jupiter had been with Leda . . . and now nothing can avert the Trojan wars" (p. 27), which portends the future disaster of this obsessive love. Later, when she has been abandoned, the narrator also thinks of herself as Dido, who is abandoned by her lover, Aeneas. She laments, "By the

Pacific I wander like Dido, heaving such a passion of tears in the breaking waves, that I wonder why the whole world isn't weeping inconsolably" (p. 108). Thus, Smart elevates the particular to the legendary, strengthening the tension and reinforcing the contrast between an external reality and a visionary inner reality.

By aligning the central characters to a legendary world, and establishing the particular characters as symbols of love, Smart enables her narrator to transcend her particular circumstances in the concrete world. Essentially, the narrator finds solace and relief in the world of the imagination, in the mythical world of heroic lovers, and in the world of literature where erotic desire and pain unite natural passion and the imagination. The transformation of the lovers into archetypes of love thematically links the lovers of the particular world with the legendary world of heroic ideals. Love is the catalyst of the transformations or metamorphoses since the lovers become one with the myths through love. Further, as Brigid Brophy suggests, "a legend of a metamorphosis is itself a metaphor of the very process of literary art."[15] Thus, love, which is the catalyst of the metamorphosis (since the lovers become the myths through love), affects the text, "the process of literary art." Specific passages within the text point to this process: the typewriter is seen as a symbol of love and the lovers spend their early days at the typewriter. At one point the narrator exclaims "how stationary life has become," their life is the stationary (pun) upon which the text is written. The metamorphosis the lovers undergo is a change from one form to another, a product of love's power which initially enables the narrator to transform into various protean shapes:

> But I have become a part of the earth: I am one of its waves flooding and leaping. I am the same tune now as the tree, hummingbirds, sky, fruits, vegetables in rows. I am all or any of these things. I can metamorphose at will. (p. 45)

The power of love's despair later transforms the angles of the external world, as when Lexington Avenue "dissolves" in the narrator's tears, and "the houses and the neonlights and the nebulae fell jumbled into the flood" (p. 118). In metamorphosis there is a change from one form to another, a change that occurs literally in the text at the level of allusion and image as they refashion the conventions of the novel to poetic function. Allusions to Blake, Shakespeare, the metaphysical poets Donne and Herbert work in conjunction with the metaleptic framework to reinforce the Biblical idea of love in exile, while images of blood and water establish the paradox of love and suffering and create a visionary and symbolic world of ecstasy and pain. At the same time, they create character and narrative progression as a series of personal revelations.

In By Grand Central Station, narrative progression occurs specifically in the network of literary allusions. The world of literature provides the narrator with the justification of "all there is" particularly in the argument she uses to conquer her initial despair at the conflict she experiences over betraying her lover's wife. Allusions establish the narrator's vision of love as kin to Blake's conception of it and her final agony to that of Macbeth's. She rationalizes that her union with her lover represents transcendence of what Blake calls "division" to unification and a state of grace.[16] In this state, the boundaries between good and evil and time and space disappear. Ironically, however, the narrator's reference to Blake's "Ah Sun-Flower" and "I Asked a Thief" reveal her inability to solve what is, in fact, a moral problem:

> I am far, far beyond that island of days where once, it seems, I watched a flower grow, and counted the steps of the sun, and fed, if my memory serves, the smiling animal at his appointed hour. (p. 24)

A mélange of allusions echoing Blake, Donne, and Rilke convey the narrator's confrontation with sexual desire and temptation when she encounters this married man:

> . . . my heart is eaten by a dove, a cat scrambles in the cave of my sex, hounds in my head obey a whipmaster who cries nothing but havoc as the hours test my endurance with an accumulation of tortures. Who, if I cried, would hear me among the angelic orders? (p. 24)

But, because love is creation, nature cannot be refused and the narrator obeys the imperatives of love: "The new moss caressed me and the water over my feet and the ferns approved me with the endearments: My darling, my darling, lie down with us now for you also are earth whom nothing but love can sow" (p. 26). Yet, once that love is consummated, she is filled with guilt. The consummation of love may be god-like, but it also exists within a world whose moral code the narrator cannot deny; at the end of part one of the novel, God's reaction is seen in the image of a "long black rainbow" and the narrator realizes there is nothing she can do but "crouch and receive God's wrath" (p. 30).

The narrator's sense of guilt is conveyed specifically in the allusion to Donne's "spider love," not God, but "bats and a spider who is weaving my guilt" (p. 34). Her struggle continues momentarily as she appeals to "Gabriel, Michael of the ministering wings" and alludes to Herbert's struggle in "The Pulley":

> What was your price, Gabriel, Michael of the ministering wing? What pulley from headlong man pulled you up in the nick of time, till you gushed vegetable laughter, and fed only off the sun? Was it your reward for wrestling successfully with such despair as this? (p. 38)

The narrator confronts the central problem and the paradox of man's moral inquiry: a fall from humanity might elevate her to another purer state of "vegetable laughter," but she realizes she can follow only her own conscience since finally "the texts are meaningless." The dictates of her conscience are those of nature and nature is sexual; she admits that "my heart is its own destructive. It beats out its poisonous rhythm of truth" (p. 38), and "my foot danced by mistake over the hopeless, and bled no solace for my butchery. My hurt was not great enough to assuage my guilt" (p. 38).

The particular reference to Macbeth and his butchery specifically suggests the narrator's feelings of treachery, feelings that have been intimated at an earlier time, when she and her lover first betray his wife. At this time, she likens herself to Macbeth, "I keep remembering that I am their host. So it is tomorrow's breakfast rather than the future's blood that dictates fatal forbearance" (p. 18). Finally, however, it is "the future's blood" that dictates; yet, the irony is apparent since the consummation of their love carries its own immanent consequences. Later, when she knows she has been betrayed and finds herself pregnant, she sees her betrayal as a double one: nature's purpose may have been only the propagation of the species and she has been only "the seedbag." Life then withers for this woman, literally and metaphorically, when the man she loves refuses the fruit of their love, and returns, out of pity, to his wife. For the narrator, the prospect of life without this love is the prospect of a life devoid of meaning: now, like Macbeth, she faces a profound abyss where "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow lie as locked and uncharted as the other face of the moon" (p. 108).

Contributing to this structure of association is a pervasive and integrating motif of images of blood and water which establishes a powerful, yet contradictory view of love as both birth and death. As the single most powerful force in the novel, love is seen as both the birth of the world and the birth of the individual; it is "land emerging from chaos." Birth is also associated with blood, and the birth of love is captured in the image of blood when after its consummation, the narrator asks, "who will drown in so much blood?" Thus, blood is associated with the power of love; the narrator says she is blinded by it, "I am blind, but blood, not love blinded my eye" (p. 34). Blood also represents suffering in the face of love, as it paradoxically represents both its birth and death. The narrator asks, "Will there be birth from all this blood, or is death only exacting his greedy price?" (p. 34).

The image of blood is a central, paradoxical, yet prophetic image in the novel as it expands in its association with the narrator's individual pain to a universal pain. The lover's wound becomes the wound of Christ as "now Jesus Christ walks the waters of another planet, bleeding only history from his old wounds" (p. 35). Later, after she has been betrayed, blood colors the narrator's perceptions so that "the streets were slushy with blood." Blood is powerful, but finally it is not as strong as love itself which is "as strong as death." The narrator's conviction of the strength and power of love in the face of all adversity is summed up in another powerful image of blood: "not all the poisonous tides of the blood I have spilt can influence these tidals of love"

(p. 41). "The tidals of love" suggests the opulence of love which is "the water of love that floods everything over" (p. 41).

The images of blood, as associated with the act of love and its subsequent guilt, pattern the second section of the novel and in the third section transform to images of water as the narrator basks in her new found love. Throughout the novel the image of water is one of power; it consumes everything in its wake. As the narrator says, "the water of love floods everything over, so that there is nothing the eye sees that is not covered in." It is so strong that "even the precise geometry of his hand, when I gaze at it, dissolves me into water, and I flow away in a flood of love" (p. 41). Ironically, the flood of love is so strong that when her lover betrays her, she begins to drown in its unrelinquishing power. Water, the symbol of love, now becomes the symbol of grief:

> There is no end. The drowning never ceases. The water submerges and blends, but I am not dead. O I am not dead. I am under the sea. The entire sea is on top of me. (pp. 118-19)

Stricken with grief, the narrator goes "whoring after oblivion" which in her dream appears as an image of drowning. The water of love that once had flooded everything over with life is now the water of death:

> And I am drenched before I reach the surface. I am drowned before I reach the waterweeds at the bottom. I avoid the glance the river gives me. But it dances on. It has lust for me. (p. 125)

In a dream, the narrator comes upon a frozen waterfall which ironically recalls the falls where "he surprised me bathing and gave me what I could no more refuse than the earth can refuse the rain" (p. 26). Only now "the water freezes into ice, the waterfall that promises liberation stands stockstill and disobedient" (p. 125). The narrator's overwhelming grief is suggested in images of drowning as thoughts of suicide subsume the external world:

> But the sea that floods is love, and it gushes out of me like an arterial wound. I am drowning in it. The fifty-storey windows glitter and collapse into water. The water is all full of astronomical points. It is a magnetic deathtrap. Everything is caught in its rush. (p. 118)

Like the image of blood, the image of water is associated with both birth and death. Neither the image of blood nor that of water suggests redemption, an impossibility in the face of the narrator's uncompromising vision of love whose only hope for redemption lies in a reconciliation with her lover.

In effect, a richly poetic language creates the experience of love as it is apprehended and experienced by the first person narrator and delineated at the level of allusion and poetic image. In this way, Smart translates the conventional signposts of the novel through her manipulation of rhetorical and poetic device to create character and narrative progression. Interestingly, the poetic structure derives its force by functioning in relation to the mimetic expectations associated with the novel as the emphasis in the novel shifts from the referential to language itself. It is the semantic relation of every word to its surrounding context that comes to the foreground and creates an internal emotional landscape, yet, ironically, in the concluding section of the novel, the apocalyptic vision of "there is no reality but love" transforms back to the dawning of a new day when "the black porters arrive and usher in the day with brooms and enormous dustpans" (p. 127). The world of timeless love that "transforms the angles of the world" ends in Grand Central Station, where, pregnant and abandoned by her lover, the narrator sits down and weeps. The reality of the external world, indifferent to the nuances or metaphors of love now asserts itself, the tangible world of pregnancy and inconvenience, the world of "transient coffee-shops and hotels," "the gloom of taverns," and "the crooning of Bing Crosby out of a juke-box." Ironically, it is this tangible, unhappy reality to which the narrator clings just as earlier she has learned to smoke for "something to hold on to":

> I dare not be without a cigarette in my hand. If I should be looking the other way when the hour of doom is struck, how shall I avoid being turned into stone unless I can remember something to do which will lead me back to the simplicity and safety of daily living. (p. 29)

The narrator's vision of love is betrayed as the facts take over; she realizes it is "the fact, the unalterable fact: It is she he is with: He is with her: He is not with me because he is sleeping with her" (pp. 97-98). Thus, the reality that increasingly intrudes in the final section of the novel reinforces the tension between the narrator's vision and hope in love and the reality of her situation. For the narrator, the failure of their love is not "the police, domestic scenes, cooling friends . . . the sordidness of hotels which were powerless," but that "he did the one sin which love will not allow":

> He did sin against love, and though he says it was in Pity's name, and that Pity was only fighting a losing battle with Love, he was useless to Pity, and in wavering, injured Love, which was, after all, what he staked all for, all he had, ungamblable. (pp. 95-96)

The final tragedy is not that the external and particular world betrays the narrator's visionary and heroic ideal of love, but that her lover betrays her irrevocably. All she has left is "the language of love"; her love is now a legend where he is "as beautiful as allegory. He is as beautiful as the legend the imagination washes up on the sand" (p. 124). Although she reaches for the sublime in her imagination, and finds its equivalent in legend, her love is rooted in fact, in the day-to-day realities of a tangible and material world.

Smart's particular use of language reinforces the sharp division between the narrator's vision of love and what becomes in reality the indifference and the hostility of the world in general. The tension between the two is increased in the unfeeling and clichéd response of others to her condition in contrast to her own torment and grief:

> They eye me. They bore a hole in my wedding finger because it is bare, and they measure my belly like tailors, to weave a juicy bit of gossip.
>
> You're in a bad way, aren't you, my dear? You're in quite a spot?
>
> Oh no, thank you, I'm all right, I'm fine. A little short of cash, maybe.
>
> If there's anything you'd like to tell me, you can tell me, you can trust me, you know. I've been around, my husband and I, we've been around. (p. 111)

Thus the metaphoric, allusive, and hyperbolic song of love is sung in an alien and material world and contrasts significantly with other discourse in the novel. The episode of the police interrogation conveys the hostile response of the external world which stands in contrast with the narrator's lyrical celebration of love. The policeman's crude interrogation and his final warning, "let this be a lesson," and Mr. Wurtle's sneering, "You should have gone to different hotels," reflect a hostility towards love while her parent's advice, "Be reasonable," shows the lack of their understanding of the power and the magnitude of this love. The other voices in the text are those of the various onlookers; the banality of their comments, "Don't you feel blue all by your lonesome" (p. 110), or, "Sure Kid. We all got our troubles" (p. 120), further reinforces the gap between the prosaic world and its view of love and the narrator's profound belief in it and her lyrical celebration of it. Her own awareness of this distance is reflected in her wry comment:

> So there be no obsequies. There is to be no mention of that which was to have conquered the world, and after the world, death. Not one of all these martyrs nailed to every tree in the western hemisphere will find favor in the editor's measuring eye. On the amusement page, to fill up space, one inch and a half, perhaps, of those who were forced to die. Butter is up ten cents. The human being is down. (p. 69)

In the final section of the novel, there is an alternating awareness of these two worlds in conflict. Although the narrator may reach for the sublime in her imagination and find its equivalent in legend, her love is rooted in fact. Although she insists, "I will _not_ be placated by the mechanical motions of existence, nor find consolation in the solicitude of waiters who notice my devastated face" (p. 117), it is this world to which she clings, a world oblivious to the legends or the language of love, a world where "odours of disinfectant wipe out love and tears," and where "the early workers overrun the world they have inherited, tramping out the stains of the wailing, bleeding past" (p. 128). Thus, the literal journey and the journey of the soul end as the facts take over. Even the literary transformations that elevate their affair to another state cease; the narrator acknowledges, "the page is as white as my face after a night of weeping. It is as sterile as my devastated mind" (p. 127). The narrator admits, "all martyrdoms are in vain" and "all battles are lost." Thus, there is a shift from the sublime back to the banal as the referential world reestablishes itself, as the "Song of Songs" fades, and the voice gives way in the final passage to:

> Well, it's too late now to complain, my honey-dove. Yes, it's all over. No regrets. No postmortems. You must adjust yourself to conditions as they are, that's all. You have to learn to be adaptable. I myself prefer Boulder Dam to Chartres Cathedral. I prefer dogs to children. I prefer corncobs to the genitals of the male. Everything's hotsy-totsy, dandy, everything's O.K. It's in the bag. It can't miss. (p. 128)

The paucity of the language indicates the extreme distance from the narrator's internal world and the novel's evocation of the language of love.

In *By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept*, Smart counterpoints a lyrical first person language of love and the language of the external world. The language of love moves outward from the external and particular world and reaches for the sublime in the legendary and universal world of love. The real drama of the novel exists in the language of the soul. Although the narrator's journey is a literal one and provides a tenuous structure of chronology, the structural principle in the novel is a metaleptic one created by a motif of allusions and images which formulates the real journey within the text as an internal one. Smart manipulates the resources of poetry including those of hyperbole, conceit, metaphor, and a unifying motif of images, as well as the rhetorical devices of metalepsis and zeugma to create an internal emotional landscape that counterpoints the particular and causal world as it delineates the paradoxical notion of love as birth and death. Both characterization and narrative progression in the novel are formulated through image and allusion as revelation. Thus, Smart refashions the conventional signposts of the novel through the exploitation of rhetorical and poetic device. Ironically, the novel derives its very force by the novel's manipulation of mimetic expectations: although the emphasis in the novel shifts to the aesthetic, it exits in tension and opposition to the referential. Yet, in essence, By Grand Central Station is an extended lyrical poem; it creates an intensely lyrical expression of one person isolated from the rest of the world by the experience of love. Brophy calls the novel "a chant" with its insistent rhythm, "the rhythm of a throb." Mallinson says, "it is a kind of obligato, an accompaniment to action, interspersed with arias." Thus, it refashions character and action through patterns of imagery and allusion and combines them in an inward, yet aesthetically objective form. It extends the dimensions of lyrical poetry to that of the novel and harmoniously integrates narrative intentions and poetic function to create a novel that functions in the manner of a poem-novel.

III

Sheila Watson's The Double Hook offers a radically different example of the novel functioning in the manner of a poem. At the time of its publication, The Double Hook provided an alternative to the traditional novel in English-Canadian prose fiction. Watson's novel is thematically and stylistically different from By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept. Smart's novel creates a highly personal emotional drama through a first person narrator, who experiences the vicissitudes of love against a harsh and sometimes brutal external reality of hypocritical and meaningless values. Watson's novel, on the other hand, utilizes a multiplicity of third person points of view to create a drama of individual isolation and reintegration through community. Watson's language in The Double Hook, which is elliptical, spare, imagistic, and notational (as in the Coyote section) is also radically different from Smart's extravagant and hyperbolic language. Whereas Smart's emblematic language intends to create experience directly, Watson uses a kind of symbolic shorthand that is, at once, concrete and universal. Yet, both Smart and Watson express a metaphoric and visionary view of the world rooted in an external and concrete world.

In By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, an interconnected pattern of image motifs, allusions, and a metaleptic framework convey and create the powerful and emotional inner world, ironically in juxtaposition and opposition to an indifferent and hostile external world. The narrative which concerns the interior life and its apocalyptic vision of love as "all there is" springs from a conveyed fictional framework. In The Double Hook, however, the experiential aspect of the novel is structured by a predetermined archetypal pattern of death and rebirth. Whereas in By Grand Central Station the duality between the inner life of feeling and the external life of hostility and indifference is conveyed in the tension between a subjective and an objective mode of perception, in The Double Hook, the literal or experiential aspect of action and character is rendered insofar as it signifies the novel's predetermined archetypal pattern. Both action and character function only in relation to the symbolic meaning of the redemptive process, and it is the redemptive process which creates the novel's narrative movement. Specifically, Watson uses image and symbol to unite the symbolic and the particular; that is, recurring images of fire, water, air, and fish and the central and controlling metaphor of the double hook universalize a physical world of individual lives and their relationships.

On a literal or mimetic level, a redemptive pattern emerges in James's action of killing his mother, his consequent departure from the community, his descent into town to a brothel, and his final decision to return to the community, to Lenchen, and to his new-born child. These actions exemplify the novel's archetypal pattern. Whereas in By Grand Central Station, a poetic mode refashions linear and temporal experience to transcend the causal and the temporal movement of the narrative, in The Double Hook, image operating as symbol creates a particular and a universal pattern of redemption rooted in the particular. The Double Hook is a novel which fulfills the expectations of that genre, that is, as a portrayal of character interaction within a specific social setting and historical time; yet the novel's significance emerges in the pattern of images containing within them the antinomies of birth and death, light and darkness, glory and fear, and fertility and sterility. These pluri-signs determine the novel's intricate system of connections between characters, their actions, and the novel's subject, and further determine the novel's structural pattern of death and rebirth. In effect, Watson subverts the conventions of narrative to symbolic and poetic function through images operating as complex symbols that incorporate a mythic structure in an archetypal pattern of redemption. Thus, she poetizes her narrative structure into a predetermined archetypal structure.[17]

The opening section of the novel immediately introduces the characters and setting as dramatis personae, that is, they are introduced by notational prose and specific line ends rather than the system of commas and periods used in conventional prose:

In the folds of the hills

under Coyote's eye

lived

the old lady, mother of William
of James and Greta

lived James and Greta
lived William and Ara his wife
lived the Widow Wagner
the Widow's girl Lenchen
the Widow's boy
lived Felix Prosper and Angel
lived Theophil
and Kip

until one morning in July[18]

"The folds of the hills/ under Coyote's eye" is the particularized landscape of the Cariboo country of the British Columbia interior. Yet, it also resonates with symbolic significance: the stricken and barren land corresponds to and reflects the inner lives of the characters. Moreover, the characters clarify their inner feelings in relation to this specific physical environment. Thus, setting has a dual correlative purpose: the wasteland reflects the sterility of the characters' inner lives; when their lives are regenerated, nature also reflects the change with the rain signifying the end of the drought. In effect, fire and air, as well as earth and water, reflect the particulars of the characters' lives by suggesting states of mind. At the same time, these images prefigure a universal pattern where the movement progresses through death to rebirth.

The novel opens with a drought; the land is sterile and impotent as the grass dries up and the cattle become stunted. Because of the dryness, Ara sees the land as a deformed and starving animal, a harbinger of death. She "felt death leaking through the entire center of the earth. Death rising to the knee. Death rising to the loin" (p. 21). Ara's way of seeing derives from her belief in an omnipotent, punitive god who offers death in lieu of water. Paradoxically, death is identified by the property of water thus signifying its absence. Yet, conversely, Ara understands the power of water to transform the land and infuse it with life:

> She saw the shallow water plocking over the roots of the cottonwood, transfiguring bark and stone.
>
> She bent towards the water. Her fingers divided it. A stone breathed in her hand. Then life drained to its centre. (p. 35)

Ironically, Greta, the most sexually repressed of the characters, intuitively understands the fertile meeting of earth and water when she says, "The potholes are filled with rain from time to time. I've seen them stiff with thirst." Greta, too, is stiff with thirst and her barrenness and sexual repression become overwhelmingly destructive.

The elements of earth and water as perceived by Ara and Greta suggest the duality of a life-giving and a death-taking force as does fire, which is both a purgative and redemptive force as well as a destructive one. Fire is associated with the precarious balance between the desire for glory and a fear of it. William points out its dual and paradoxical nature when he says, "The curious thing about fire . . . is you need it and fear it at once" (p. 129). Fire brings death to the community as well as life and although Mrs. Potter's ghost tells her daughter, Greta, "a person has to know how to play with fire" (p. 85), Greta lights fire to her house and dies in it. Yet, there is also a fire that purifies; for James, the burning of his mother's house provides a release, a necessary step to his personal freedom and also for the process of rebirth.

Generally, the sterility of the land is indicative of the sterility of the community and the repression and fear of its inhabitants. The destructive aspects of the sterility within their lives manifests itself most clearly in the characters of Mrs. Potter and Greta. It manifests itself physically as sexual repression in the character of Greta, and in her mother, Mrs. Potter, it manifests itself psychologically as she imposes her repression on the other characters in the community, thus creating a spirit of fear among its inhabitants. In turn, this spirit of fear has destructive consequences: James kills his mother and deserts Lenchen who is pregnant with his child; Angel deserts her husband, Felix, for Theophil; and Kip defies God by destructively seeking power.

Coyote, too, is a figure in the novel associated with the land: as the spirit of the repression that pervades the community, he symbolizes the unseen spirit of the land; he is the antithesis of the community, amoral and driven by instinctive needs. He represents both the instinctive and natural forces of the land as well as the irrational force or power within the individuals. Although Coyote is not seen until the end of the novel when he is reduced to the figure of a barking dog, his presence spreads throughout the land. Each character is thus appropriately introduced "under Coyote's eye." The land and the community both embody the spirit of Coyote: he "made the land his pastime. He stretched out his paw. He breathed on the grass" (p. 22). Thus, the thoughts of fear and death, arising before and after the death of Mrs. Potter, stem from Coyote.[19]

Significantly, Mrs. Potter is the character most closely associated with Coyote. Like him, she is more a force than a character and her spirit dominates her children and the community in general. Mrs. Potter aligns herself with the amoral Coyote when she defies the light of God with her own lamp; consequently, her fish bring neither sustenance nor salvation to the others: "It's not for fish she fishes, Ara thought. There's only three of them. They can't eat all the fish she'd catch" (p. 20). Her alliance with Coyote casts a general tyrannical hold on the community:

> Still the old lady fished. If the reeds had dried up and the banks folded and crumbled down she would have fished still. If God had come into the valley, come holding out the long finger of salvation, moaning in the darkness, thundering down the gap at the lake head, skimming across the water, drying up the blue signature like blotting paper, asking where, asking why, defying an answer, she would have thrown her line against the rebuke; she would have caught a piece of mud and looked it over; she would have drawn a line with the barb when the fire of righteousness baked the bottom. (p. 20)

James, Mrs. Potter's son, rebels against his mother's tyrannical force and the psychological repression she has inflicted on her family and on the community. For this reason, James pushes her down the stairs, killing her, and ironically freeing himself.

Greta, the most unfortunate of the characters, manifests both the sterility of the land and her mother's tyrannical oppression in her own sexual repression. Unlike James, however, she is unable to free herself even after her mother's death, and despite Mrs. Potter's warning about playing with matches, she deliberately burns down the house with herself in it. Symbolically, Greta sacrifices herself to the force of Coyote; as she lights the fire, Coyote's voice echoes in the background:

And Coyote cried in the hills:
I've taken her where she stood
my left hand is on her head
my right hand embraces her. (p. 85)

The ironic sexual innuendo suggests that Greta succumbs to Coyote's dark and irrational force.

Mrs. Potter and Greta are linked with Coyote; therefore, like Coyote, they represent an antithetical force to the community. The other characters similarly exhibit a sense of isolation in the general repression of their warmth and sympathy. Angel is married to Felix and has borne him children, but Felix recognizes that they live together "by necessity. By indifference." Angel moves in with Theophil but he wants even less involvement and commitment. Angel admits she lives in a community of "empty spaces." The widow Wagner rejects her pregnant daughter, Lenchen, rather than face the shame of her pregnancy. Theophil fears both emotion and involvement and admits, "sometimes, too, it's better for the eyes to close" (p. 56). Rather than reach out to each other or band together as a community, the characters retreat into individual isolation where they neither see nor act. Regeneration or redemption is not possible until the characters come together literally to participate in the birth of Lenchen's baby; by coming together as a community to aid Lenchen they symbolically participate in their own salvation.

In general, the characters in the novel are motivated and respond to circumstances that are significant only insofar as they further the predetermined pattern within the novel and correspond to the dialectics that determine this pattern. The narrative movement is dependent upon the characters coming to an understanding of community through vision.

Whereas Mrs. Potter, Greta, and Coyote are particularized by their association with the negative or the dark forces of the land, Kip, Ara, and Felix contain within them the potential for light, vision, community. Images of eyes and seeing, central to understanding and vision, are associated with these characters.

Kip, for instance, has been given the gift of intuitive vision, but he uses this gift to destructive ends. He justifies his behavior (he attempts to seduce Lenchen and he ridicules James) as an irrational force. He says, "the old white moon had me by the hair" (p. 116). His response recalls an earlier description of Kip, "Raising his hand to the white glory for which he thirsted" (p. 58). Like Mrs. Potter, Kip aligns himself with the force of Coyote even though he is the only one of the characters who has the insight to articulate the duality in life, that "you can't catch the glory on a hook and hold onto it. That when you fish for glory you catch the darkness, too" (p. 61). Although Kip is aware that Coyote practices duality by "reaching out reflected glory," he, too, reaches for that glory and is deceived by it. Kip's abuse of his powers is evident when Coyote calls him "his servant," and his sight is taken from him literally when James blinds him, saying: "If you were God Almighty, if you'd as many eyes as a spider, I'd get them all" (p. 67). Kip's blindness represents his false sight.

Ara, on the other hand, has intuition, if not perception. It is Ara who, following Greta's suicide, has a vision of hope for the purgatorial existence of the community: "Everything shall live when the rain comes, she said out loud. And she saw a great multitude of fish" (p. 114). Although the image of the fish suggests fertility and abundance, Ara admits her own blindness when it comes to understanding the real force that would integrate the community. She rejects love as a unifying force; rather, she embodies and experiences the pain and suffering around her and intimates a final pessimistic note when she contemplates Lenchen's new baby with, "I never see baby-clothes . . . that I don't think how a child puts on suffering with them" (p. 119).

Felix, too, has a vision in a dream in which he assumes priestly clothes. In his dream, he rejects the call of Coyote and welcomes Angel, his erstwhile wife, home with the words that begin the canon of the mass, "Domine non sum dignus" (p. 51). There is a suggestion of the redemption of mankind in these words that link Felix with the pattern of renewal and rebirth in the novel. Furthermore, his assistance at Lenchen's delivery represents his contribution to the salvation of the community: "It was not until the girl had come battering at his peace that he'd wondered at all about the pain of a growing root" (p. 126). Felix accepts both Lenchen and Kip into his house and asks Angel to return. In so doing, he renews his responsibilities to the others and moves beyond the "huge indifference" that had threatened to overtake him.

Specifically the narrative movement in the novel from lack of understanding to vision and from stasis to action, hence regeneration, is determined by James's actions, the pivotal character around whom the events of the novel occur. He is overtly responsible for the life and death within the community; he kills his mother but he also brings new life in the birth of his child by Lenchen. Unlike Kip, Ara, or Felix, James is neither endowed with special vision nor is he associated with the darker instinct of Coyote. Unlike the other characters, however, he gains understanding, hence knowledge, through his actions. He kills his mother as an act of defiance, and as an act of freedom in order to release himself, his sister Greta, and the community from her tyranny. James also seduces Lenchen as a way of releasing himself into life, "to drink fire into his darkness." However, he finds he is caught by the consequences of his actions and his initial reaction is to escape to another world. He runs away to town but he finds himself in another wasteland smelling of mud and dead fish. Crossing the bridge into town, he sees "the dark figure of his mother playing her line out into the full flood" (p. 92) of the river. James finds he is not yet free of his mother, that he is confronted with another wasteland, one where people are corrupt and the fish "imported and pickled." Ironically, James's final descent to the brothel leads him to himself: Lilly's simulated passion reminds him of his feelings for Lenchen and the real fire of their passion, a fire that is productive and wherein lies "his simple hope." James now sees that he cannot escape his mother or himself; he realizes "for the first time, in his life, he felt quite alone" (p. 107). He also understands the inadequacy of his defiance, that "all he'd done was scum rolled up to the top of the pot by boiling motion underneath" (p. 99).

The experience in the brothel and the town leaves James with no alternative but to return to the community in the hills. His literal change of direction, however, is partly a result of the fact that his money has been stolen from him by the prostitute, Lilly. Yet, following this experience, he begins to understand and accept his new responsibility and returns home through the dust and the dead grass. As he nears home he enters a meadow of wild hay watered by a hidden spring. Thus, his change in direction has explicit meaning: his physical journey patterns the redemptive process; that this process is complete is made clear by the image of light that illuminates his home as he nears it:

> James's horse still brought him on. Night had shrunk into the long shadows of the trees, into the slender shadows of the grass, into the flitting shadow of the birds. Light defined the world. It picked out the shattered rock, the bleached and pitted bone. (p. 126)

On his return, James confronts the ashes of the past and the hope of the future: he embraces his child, feeling that "he had turned once more into the first pasture of things" (p. 131). Thus, his journey determines the literal and the symbolic pattern of the novel as a particular and universal process of redemption. It exemplifies the necessity of community and replaces Mrs. Potter's rejection of it.

Ironically, it is Heinrich, the most elusive of the characters, who understands that community is a necessary end to isolation when he says, "I've held my tongue . . . when I should have used my voice like an axe to cut down the wall between us" (p. 82). William, too, realizes the need for community when he says, "a man needs living things about him . . . to remind him he's not a stone or a stick" (p. 129). The need to act together as a community is understood in the final gathering at Felix's, a gathering that suggests rebirth. For different reasons, the characters gather at Felix's: the widow Wagner comes to resume her proper responsibilities as Lenchen's mother; Angel and Ara come to offer aid to the girl Lenchen; Lenchen is there because she is about to give birth and needs help, as does the blinded Kip; and James comes to resume his communal and personal responsibilities. In this respect, the regenerative process within the novel is a linear one structured by James's actions and his final acceptance of Lenchen and his child. The symbolic implications of the meeting are explicit as the world is metaphorically reborn in Felix's prophetic dream with "the cup lifting. The bread breaking" (p. 51).

In turn, the cyclical regenerative process that determines the symbolic structure of The Double Hook is defined by the interplay of the images of dark and light and earth and fire; they particularize and universalize the conflict between sight and blindness, life and death, fear and glory. These dualities are reinforced in the dialectics established in the interplay of the images of water, earth, and fire. In context, light is associated with fire which can bring life as well as death; it is also associated with sight which gives knowledge and motivates the impulse for social and spiritual integration, community, and communication. Contrarily, darkness suggests a lack of vision and isolation, both of which stand in opposition to the spirit of the community: community and communion are essential for integration and rebirth. The pattern of these images suggests the double hook of life; in the regenerative process, darkness, isolation, and death can be transcended, but, at the same time, they must be accommodated and incorporated into the pattern of life.

The novel's central image of the double hook suggests the duality of human existence established in the interplay of the images of light and dark and functions as the central governing principle within the novel. It symbolizes the paradox of life in death and death in life. Even as the old lady is pushed by James into death, he is paradoxically drawn into life. By accepting his child with Lenchen, James moves beyond a world dominated by the dead, to a new life.

Redolent in Watson's universe is the vision of redemption suggestive of the Christian concept of redemption. James's journey from death and sterility to new light and new life is particularized in the character of Felix, who in the course of the novel becomes "Saint Felix."

Felix mediates at the final gathering with a fish-bone in his hand, and, significantly, he catches a fish (the traditional Christian symbol of Christ) in a dream and shares it with the others. It is also significant that before James sees his way to a new life, he rejects the "kettle of fish" prepared by the women in the brothel, and that Ara's prophetic vision is of a "great multitude of fish." Nevertheless, these Christian allusions are integrated into the larger, pervasive mythological pattern established by the figure of Coyote as the nameless fear of the unknown: William acknowledges, "Your god sounds only a step from Indian's Coyote." Both Christian ideals and Indian legend suggest a significant universal and elemental world that holds the potential for renewal as well as destruction.

Thus the external elements of the natural world function as symbols to convert the particular and physical world and the universal into a symbolic design. As well, specific image motifs individualize character. Mrs. Potter, for instance, is always seen with a fishline and fish in her hands; Kip is portrayed by the image of eyes; and Ara has visions of water. Just as the actions of the characters exemplify a preordained pattern, individual characteristics which are selected for purposes to create character also suggest and conform to the larger archetypal pattern of the novel.

In general, too, concrete images work in relation to abstract concepts such as death, glory, fear, and darkness, a pattern established in the opening of the novel, which begins with Greta "at the stove. Turning hotcakes. Reaching for the coffee beans. Grinding away James's voice":

> James was at the top of the stairs. His hand half-raised. His voice in the rafters.
>
> James walking away. The old lady falling. There under the jaw of the roof. In the vault of the bed loft. Into the shadow of death. (p. 19)

The specific action contrasts with the abstraction of the Biblical allusion "the shadow of death." The same pattern occurs in the next section, where Mrs. Potter is fishing: "Still the old lady fished. If the reeds had dried up and the banks folded or crumbled down she would have fished still" contrasts with "if God had come into the valley, come holding out the long finger of salvation" (p. 20). The focus is on the specific concrete action of Mrs. Potter's fishing, but the action is relevant to the narrative movement only in its suggestion of a lack of salvation.

As well, the repetition of a particular image of growth throughout the text further suggests and reinforces structurally the connection between an elemental or natural world and a world of spiritual values of faith, community, and redemption. For instance, the image suggests the beginning or the flicker of insight when the widow Wagner begins to understand that even after death life continues:

> Then she stopped. Hearing her own voice in the boy's silence. Her face stirring like ground cracked above a growing shoot. (p. 80)

The same image is repeated when Felix bends to help Lenchen when she begins to give birth: "It was not until the girl had come battering at his peace that he'd wondered at all about the pain of a growing root" (p. 126). The same image establishes James's decision to change his life and to commit himself to Lenchen and his child: "Out of his corruption life had leafed and he'd stepped on it carelessly as a man steps on spring shoots" (p. 127). The repetition of this image of growth establishes a pattern of association connecting the generative cycle in nature with the regeneration of the individual characters, thus reinforcing a consistent and insistent play in the novel between a causal world of characters in a temporal setting and an abstract world of universal significance. The conjunction of this microscopic and macroscopic world pervades and determines the structure and style of the novel.

The particulars of character, event, and place also gain further symbolic significance in the verse sections of the novel. At the end of part one, a second listing of characters appears: the stylistic repetition of the list gains further significance in the opening allusion to Nineveh:

> There were more
> than sixscore thousands persons
> in Nineveh (p. 33)

The Biblical reference to Nineveh clearly points to an association between the wickedness and corruption of the ancient Biblical city with the wasteland of this Canadian region, and underlines the Christian symbolism within the novel in general. The verbal repetition of "lived tenscore other souls" (p. 92) connects Nineveh with the town to which James escapes and further points to the corruption within the town. In another allusion, the old lady is linked with the whale and "Jonah":

> the old lady, lost like Jonah perhaps
> in the cleft belly of the rock
> the water washing over her (p. 34)

The allusion of this verse section prefigures the chance for regeneration of the land by water.

The other verse sections in the text are related to the figure of Coyote: each section, in turn, works to suggest the power of fear as represented by Coyote:

> Above on the hills
> Coyote's voice rose among the rocks:
> In my mouth is forgetting
> In my darkness is rest (p. 29)

Coyote's force is destructive because it is seductive; it is an elemental force that lies beyond the rational powers of man, and it manifests itself in fear. The repetition of Coyote's voice throughout unifies the text structurally while creating a rhythmic cadence. Furthermore, the verse sections function associatively and symbolically in relation to the prose section of the novel, thereby reinforcing the central metaphor of life's double hook of light and darkness, glory and fear. Time similarly functions to reinforce the structural pattern of concentration and abstraction, and the particular and the universal as subjective and objective time contract and merge in a specific image:

> The remembrance of event and the slash of rain merged. Time annihilated in the concurrence. The present contracted into the sweet hot cup he fondled. Vast fingers circling it. (p. 39)

In Felix's memory, time and event merge with another time and event, both contracted and contained in the image of the cup.

The theme of duality is pervasive in The Double Hook, manifesting itself in style and structure. The associative interplay between image and symbol in the prose sections of the novel control and unify the novel thematically and formally, and express the empirical and the universal simultaneously. The metaphor of the double hook, the verbal repetition of lines and allusions, and the interplay of images and symbols create a narrative with poetic intent.[20] The images establish an associative pattern between a novelistic world of character and event, and an abstracted world of universal significance; they function as symbols that convert the particulars of time, place, event, and character to symbolic purpose and create an archetypal pattern of birth and rebirth. Thus, The Double Hook creates its own integral and cohesive form as it articulates a narrative that is, at once, concrete and literal and abstract and universal. It dramatizes psychological and physical rebirth literally and metaphorically in a tightly patterned and symbolic form as it subverts the conventions of the novel to poetic function.

Although structurally, stylistically, and thematically Elizabeth Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and Sheila Watson's The Double Hook are different, they are both poetic novels. Furthermore, they are paradigmatic poem-novels; both successfully integrate narrative intentions with poetic conventions. Both Smart and Watson translate the concrete and the particular to a universal reality and both writers root their visions in the common ground of actuality. Whereas Smart uses figurative and rhetorical devices to create opposition and tension between the internal emotional state of the narrator and the indifference of the outer world, Watson uses image as symbol to create a literal and a symbolic pattern simultaneously.

In By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and The Double Hook, Elizabeth Smart and Sheila Watson successfully manipulate and exploit the conventions of narrative to poetic function and aesthetic ends. They specifically provide new perspectives and new means towards the expression and the dramatization of experience. In so doing they make harmonious the two different sets of reader expectations associated with poetry and with narrative prose fiction and create in the process what might be seen as a new genre in English-Canadian fiction. It is poetic sensibility and the exploitation of the techniques of poetry and language that make these novels stand outside the tradition of realism as paradigmatic poem-novels.

CHAPTER THREE

A. M. KLEIN'S THE SECOND SCROLL AND LEONARD COHEN'S BEAUTIFUL LOSERS: SYMBOLIC PATTERN AS NARRATIVE MODE

> "There has been a change in novels, with which both the theory and the practice of reading must come to terms."
>
> Jonathan Culler, Structuralist Poetics

A. M. Klein's The Second Scroll and Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers are landmarks in English-Canadian literature. Tom Marshall speculates that Cohen was influenced by Klein: he notes that the aims and the methods are in many ways similar.[1] Each novel presents a symbolic portrait of a search for spiritual meaning and an integrated self, subjects already expressed in their poetry and given further expression in their novels. Yet, as novels, these works are radically different stylistically. Although both Klein and Cohen employ a rich and exotic language, Cohen's language functions differently from Klein's; in Klein's novel, language is equivalent to the "miracle" by which the people of Israel create a new language, a language that brings them together in a common goal. In Cohen's novel, language creates its own solipsistic world, a closed system of what one critic calls "a hermetically sealed world."[2] In other words, language is severed from an external world as it creates the internal landscape of the characters, thus creating a personal myth that transcends the spatial and temporal boundaries imposed by the conventions of plot and character.

Despite these fundamental differences, however, The Second Scroll and Beautiful Losers, like Watson's The Double Hook, develop symbolic or poetic modes of patterning to create narrative structures, but with different degrees of success. Whereas a symbolic pattern formulates the narrative of The Double Hook, in The Second Scroll a symbolic pattern is superimposed upon a conventional framework of temporal and linear ordering of events. In Beautiful Losers, however, Cohen recreates traditional narrative conventions to poetic function in an archetypal search for self and fulfillment. Both novels articulate a search for meaning, but whereas Klein attempts to fuse two worlds, the narrator's literal search for his uncle with a symbolic search for Israel, Cohen dramatically deconstructs one world (in a literal assault on the conventions of plot, character, and linearity) in order to create an entirely new one of magic and miracle.

In this respect, Beautiful Losers represents an important development from The Second Scroll: Klein is unable to free himself totally from the sequence of empirical events, whereas Cohen, rather than depicting a causally and temporally bound reality, dramatizes the recreation of a new world that obeys its own organic rules of composition.[3] In The Second Scroll, narrative conventions fail to integrate with symbolic intentions. Although Klein thematically establishes art as a metaphor for miracle, his thematic statement does not function structurally to integrate the literal with the symbolic. The thematic implications point symbolically to a transcendent reality, yet as a structuring and formal device, they fail to integrate narrative and dramatic intentions with poetic and aesthetic effect. Cohen, however,

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deliberately exploits the novel's conventions of plot and character to dramatize the duality between the spirit and the flesh in their struggle for unification. Cohen's characters exist within a narrative structure and a dramatic framework, yet they also function as symbolic figures representing abstract ideas whose various pairings produce successive and deepening levels of meaning within the novel. Thus, Cohen utilizes the mimetic conventions of the novel while, at the same time, he deconstructs them; the novel's characters and their actions function within a mimetic framework, yet they also function symbolically. Cohen, more than Klein, successfully integrates narrative conventions with poetic intentions.

II

In her full-length study of Klein, Miriam Waddington finds serious problems in The Second Scroll as a fictional narrative, particularly in "its sudden allegorical eruptions, sparse characterization, and elaborate glosses."[4] She finds these "inexcusably manipulative of the reader," reflecting an unwillingness on Klein's part "to make up his mind about what mode he wanted to use."[5] Looking at the novel from a different perspective, and interested in the fictional aspect of Klein's development from his poetry, Malcolm Ross finds the characteristics of the novel in keeping with those of his poetry:

> It is the story of a quest at once personal, communal, and spiritual. The method is that of analogy and is therefore of a piece with the patterning of diverse and seemingly discontinuous facts of experience characteristic of Klein's best poetry.[6]

These remarks make clear that Klein's venture into the novel is, in fact, experimental in form and complex in theme, that it attempts to express a highly personal vision in novel form while departing from the traditional conventions in the English Canadian novel up to that time.

The general development in Klein's poetry interestingly parallels the development of The Second Scroll while the novel imposes a clearer pattern upon the large body of Klein's poetry. In his article, "Abraham Klein and the Problem of Synthesis," John Matthews suggests, "It is illuminating to examine the first four stages of Klein's development in terms of the fifth, represented by The Second Scroll."[7] He points out that the five chapters of The Second Scroll, "Genesis," "Exodus," "Leviticus," "Numbers," and "Deuteronomy," and the five glosses at the end of the novel, "Gloss Aleph," "Gloss Beth," "Gloss Gimel," "Gloss Dalid," and "Gloss Hai," correspond to the five books of the Pentateuch, the First Scroll, or Torah, all of which corresponds, in turn, to Klein's development as a poet.[8] In The Second Scroll, "Genesis" deals primarily with the narrator's childhood and his early manhood. The narrator's interest in Uncle Melech corresponds to the first of the glosses, "Gloss Aleph," or "Autobiographical," which describes his early life and his commitment to the search for the "fabled city." Klein's early poetry (Matthews dates it to 1932) is primarily concerned with childhood impressions and recollections. The second chapter of the novel, "Exodus," concerns the narrator's visit to the newly created state of Israel in search of his uncle, who has turned from his faith to embrace that of communism. Matthews points out that the second stage of Klein's poetry is marked by poems of overt social protest and a concomitant loss of his own faith. Similarly, in "Leviticus," Melech endures the agonies of the prison camp, but he regains his faith; in the third period of Klein's poetry, he gains new faith. "Numbers" similarly corresponds to Klein's fourth period of poetry; it contains an account of the Jews among foreign people and foreign lands, as well as a new beginning of faith. In "Numbers," the narrator goes to Rome still in search of his uncle, where he finds Melech has gone to the Sistine Chapel to study Christian art and it is here that the narrator discovers the humanity of man in a common brotherhood as the sons of God. The third gloss, "Gloss Gimel," comprises Melech's humanistic interpretation of the Sistine Chapel. In "Deuteronomy," Melech dies a martyr's death and becomes the explicit symbol of his people, and the narrator finishes his pilgrimage with peace and some kind of understanding. "Gloss Hai," the final gloss in the novel, appropriately offers a hymn in celebration of life, and in Klein's final period of poetry, he formulates a new faith and turns to more domestic subjects as in the poems "In the Provinces," "Grain Elevators," and "Lone Bathers," poems in which the poet, himself, is less personally involved.[9] The thematic extensions of Klein's poetry into The Second Scroll determine the allegorical pattern, or journey of the intellectual Jew in the contemporary world, and exemplify Klein's central vision of exile and redemption, of the search for God, and of the desire for unification with him.

The development of Klein's poetry similarly reflects an inner journey from the unquestioning faith and devotion of his first book of poems, Hath Not A Jew (1940), through to the doubts and denial of the poems in The Rocking Chair (1948). In The Second Scroll (1951), the search for faith (which has been shaken) is explicit in the symbolic implications of the narrator's actual quest for his lost uncle, a character who is the symbolic reincarnation of the Messiah and the spirit of Israel.

In his poetry, Klein tests his own religious beliefs in relation to the question of evil; in such poems as "In Re Soloman Warshawer," "Reb Levi Yitschok Talks to God," "Rabbi Yom-Tob of Mayence Petitions his God," and "Psalm 11," the theme of the emergence of good out of evil suggests a power and a design beyond human comprehension. In The Second Scroll, he again explores the question of evil in the figure of Uncle Melech. Klein's concern with anti-Semitic feelings is related to his commitment to the Zionist cause and a religious yearning that manifests itself in the narrator's search for his uncle, his search for Israel, and in Uncle Melech's own search for God.

The return to the theme of Jewish expulsion and suffering in The Second Scroll is a return to a personal involvement and questioning which marks the voice and the tone of the novel. In fact, the first person point of view in The Second Scroll is a thinly disguised persona of the poet. In Elizabeth Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, a highly personal and idiosyncratic first person point of view creates a sustained monologue. However close the individual voice or consciousness may be to Smart's, or however true the events may be, in fact, there is never any confusion between the first person narrator and the author's persona. Although the lyrical voice and the lyrical language share in the tradition of lyrical poetry, the novel's form is tied to a fictitious self in a world of concrete particularity. In Klein's novel, however, there is a distinct wavering between the lyrical voice of a poetic consciousness and the didactic intentions of the author. A minor character like Mr. Settano is pared down to a didactic purpose only; as his name suggests, he is a personification for evil where evil is specifically equated with "a materialistic interpretation of history."[10]

As well, the blurring of the narrator's persona with that of Klein, the poet, is partly a result of the voice in the novel, which is suspiciously Klein's as, for example, when the narrator describes his impressions upon hearing an Arab's song:

> It was the music, however, its minor key, its gesticulative cadence, that bowed to me, that touched lips and forehead to me, that greeted me with salaam-shalom, that with cantorial trills and tremolos self-infatuated made holiday for me, rising, as the singer swooned, to paradisiac fields, falling, descending, lingering recitative upon a middle path, and finally with meditative mournfulness coming to rest with sob, with sigh. I recognized in that singing the accents of forgotten kinship and was through it transported back to ancient star-canopied desert campfires about which there sat, their faces firelit, my ancestors and that Arab's. (p. 57)

The narrator's sense of affinity between the Arab and the Jew, as suggested to him in the Arab's song, sounds like Klein's sentiments, as does the language of the passage sound like the language of Klein's poetry; it is equivalent to Klein's belief in the narrator's discovery of the power of language to unify and restore.

Clearly, The Second Scroll intends a further purpose than a purely fictional one, an intention which is realized in the allegorical and symbolic implications of the journey, and in the novel's characterization, and glosses. Malcolm Ross points out that "the patterning of diverse and seemingly discontinuous facts of existence" (characteristic of Klein's poetry) is similarly evident in the novel through an analogical method involving the lyric, the dramatic, and the epic modes:

> The narrator (presumably the author) is in search of Israel, in search of his fabulous Uncle Melech, in search of himself. The narrative account of the journey from Montreal to Israel by way of Rome is terse reportage illuminated and deepened by an original use of footnote. . . . The lyrical cry is matched and

> met in other footnotes by fragments of formal drama and brilliant exercises in symbolism and exegesis . . . . the epic wandering and arrival of the ancient sacred tribe is recapitulated in the odyssey of the modern Jew.[11]

In Watson's The Double Hook, James's journey to town and home again serves a dramatic and narrative function as well as a symbolic one; in the same way, the characters in The Double Hook and their actions create narrative progression while, at the same time, they represent abstract concepts or ideas. Watson grounds her figures in a narrative context while giving them symbolic significance. In The Second Scroll, Klein's intentions are to illustrate central ideas rather than create dramatic situations and characters. Characters such as Monsignor Piersanti, who is described as a person "double-edged with paradox aimed at easy explanation that both the economists and the psychiatrists had to offer for the world's ills" (p. 41), is, like Mr. Settano, reduced to spare outline. The allegorical and didactic significance of these characters is obvious, yet the allegorical implications within the novel, as a whole, are never fully sustained, partly because of the complexity of the role of the narrator's uncle Melech.

The character of Uncle Melech is problematic; he is both a real character for whom the narrator searches, as well as an allegorical figure within the story's didactic context. As the various roles in Melech's life change, the meaning of the narrator's journey becomes clearer: the young Canadian Jew follows his uncle through Europe, North Africa, and Israel, a journey that brings him to an understanding of his uncle's life. In the course of his search, Melech becomes a modern symbol of the

Jewish people. The symbolic meaning of the role of Melech is suggested in the photograph of him shown to the narrator in Casablanca. The narrator, who has pursued his uncle without finding him, now finds in the photograph "a double, a multiple exposure" (p. 61). Again, when the narrator describes his flight over the Mediterranean to Israel, he calls it "an ascension, a going forward in which I was drawn on and on by the multiple-imaged appearing and disappearing figure of Melech" (p. 71). The "multiple-imaged" figure corresponds to the literal multiple exposure of the photograph and suggests Melech's broad identification with all the Jewish people. The identification is complete when the narrator finds the faces and the names of the people of Israel evoking possibilities of Melech, and is reinforced when the narrator discovers Melech has gone to Casablanca to live in the mellah with the most wretched of the Jews. When Melech is murdered in Israel by Arab marauders, the identification of Melech as the modern symbol of Israel is literally stated when the Israeli describes "how he had become a kind of mirror, an aspaklaria, of the events of our time" (p. 92). As M. W. Steinberg says, Melech exemplifies the Jew in exile:

> . . . [Melech's] experiences, his divagations from the faith--his enticement to other ways and beliefs--are those of his people, as are his sufferings, the burden of the galuth, and his eternal quest for truth and justice, and his final ascendance to the Promised Land.[12]

Melech's final ascendance to the Promised Land is represented in the literal rising of the dead at Kamenets; thus, figuratively he brings the dead to life through his own life and actions. Melech now represents the figure of Christ, a role that is reinforced by his name, Melech (King) Davidson (David: son) who is none other than the Messiah commonly referred to as Messiah ben David (David's son) or simply, "Son of David."

The role of Uncle Melech serves to clarify the meaning of the narrator's literal journey by thematically linking Melech's religious search with the narrator's secular one. The narrator, a journalist sent to gather the new songs of the Jewish people, travels over three continents to find his uncle and in the course of his journey, he discovers the real meaning of his uncle's life and his own kinship with all Jews. The literal journey which the narrator makes to Israel is to discover for his publisher the poetry of the reborn people; it provides the narrative thread of the novel although the narrator's search is really a metaphorical one, a search for identification. Once he feels an identification with all Jews, he is able to fulfill his original mission of discovering and translating the poetry of Israel which he finds in the imagination of the Jewish people as a whole. The literal and the figurative search, or the secular and the religious search, merge thematically and structurally in the figure of Uncle Melech.

The allegorical implications developed around the character of Uncle Melech and the narrator's search for him are undercut, however, by the literal and the figurative function of Melech. As a literal character in a narrative, Melech's character is never fully developed in the novelistic sense; yet, he is more than just a symbolic embodiment of the Jewish people in that he has a specific dramatic purpose in the novel. However, the encounter between the narrator and his uncle is a symbolic one, not a literal one; it is the metaphorical expression of the secular artist, from the new world, meeting the presence of his uncle, who represents the old Jewish European world and its traditional values of religious expression. In effect, the search merges in a literal double exposure as "the incognito uncle and the nephew unmet" (p. 40) join in separate but related quests. Both the structure of the plot and the purpose of characterization become explicit in the meeting of these quests. However, what originally appears to have been allegorical in intention becomes literal, when the narrator discovers what Melech had already concluded in his meditations in the Sistine Chapel and contained in "Gloss Gimel," his exegesis on the paintings of the ceiling: "out of these descriptions he sought to establish his basic premise: the divinity of humanity" (p. 51). The narrator, in his search both for Melech and the new poetry of the people of Israel, discovers that this divinity "was there all the time--the fashioning folk anonymous and unobserved, creating word by word, phrase by phrase, the total work that when completed would stand as epic revealed" (p. 84). The "miracle" turns out to be what Waddington calls "the poetry of everyday speech":

> . . . language is at one and the same time both poetry and the source of poetic renewal; it is creation and creator together. The key image is miracle; but the miracle is language, and language, to the narrator, is poetry and poetry is creation; and creation as Melech discovered in the Sistine Chapel, is life.[13]

"Miracle" is a key word and image; it functions in the metaphoric sense of the vitality and rebirth seen in the people of the new state of Israel, and it recalls Melech's statement of faith, "when the years were ripened, and the years fulfilled, then was there fashioned Aught from Naught" (p. 38).

Essentially, the thin line of the narrative and the sparse characterization function only to illustrate Klein's thesis, or theme, that the discovered poetry of Israel is the miraculous. When the narrator recalls his uncle's statement of faith, he experiences an epiphanous moment at the Arch of Titus, a structure in Rome that commemorates the destruction of the Jewish state and the dispersion of its people. The narrator's feelings of humiliation now change to triumph as he recalls his uncle's words and understands their meaning. The final gloss, "Gloss Hai," restates this premise through poetry and song, as liturgy affirming the ultimate goodness of God's great design.

In effect, The Second Scroll documents and dramatizes Klein's personal statement that the search for Zion is inseparable from the search for God and an understanding of his ways. Klein brings together secular and religious considerations, so that the poet's attempt at self-definition through art parallels God's desire to make Himself and His ways manifest. The metaphoric representation of art as "miracle" functions in the symbolic pattern of Melech's journey to combine the secular quest of the first person narrative with a spiritual and universal quest of redemption. However, the metaphoric attempt to draw narrative content and symbolic motif into a structural, or formal, unity fails. A narrative mode and its depiction of character and a traditional causal pattern of ordered events becomes antithetical to the symbolic and didactic outlines of the story. Klein attempts to unify a temporal and linear narrative and symbolic pattern in the image of the photograph functioning as metaphor, but the image is not pervasive, nor does it provide a successful transition for connecting its symbolic significance with the external reality.

The glosses, too, are problematic in The Second Scroll. They consist of poems ("Gloss Aleph" and "Gloss Hai"), a prose poem ("Gloss Gimel"), and a prose drama ("Gloss Dalid"). Rather than further the fictional narrative, as Waddington suggests, they disrupt it. Unlike the

Coyote sections of Watson's The Double Hook, which function thematically and structurally within the narrative context, Klein's glosses remain what Ross calls "brilliant exercises in symbolism and exegesis." "Gloss Hai," for example, contains some of Klein's finest lyrical writing; it is a metaphoric expression of what Klein expresses dramatically in the novel per se and as such functions as an interesting gloss on the novel. The Sistine Chapel is a metaphoric expression of the search for unification and good in the face of diversity and evil; the expression of this is the miracle of art. Although "Gloss Gimel" is an excerpt from a letter written by Melech on the Sistine Chapel, in structure it is a prose-poem "proliferating with significance" like the ceiling itself.[14] For Melech, Michelangelo's painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel represents God's desire to make Himself manifest through art. It is divine communication with man's collaboration in God's continuous creation. Miracle, by its very nature, is revelation, and it is revelation that the narrator experiences when reading Melech's description of these paintings. He sees the terrible events of his day transformed into a "great image of rebirth, the myth of exile and redemption" (p. 116).

In his analysis of "Gloss Gimel," Zailig Pollock describes the structure as "circular, imitating the 'magic circles' which symbolize the process of exile and redemption."[15] Pollock points out that the fragmented first sentence of the letter can be brought together with the last sentence, to restore wholeness and syntactic sense. Structurally, this reinforces the "great image of rebirth, the myth of exile and redemption." What Melech sees on the ceiling is "theorems made flesh" or the divine eternal order manifesting itself in humanity. The same premise is expressed dramatically by the narrator in The Second Scroll, who perceives that the key image "miracle" is the poet's revelation of human experience through metaphor. Miracle is made explicit for Klein in language and primarily in the function of metaphor, since the miracle of poetry is the result of the poet's compression and fusion of a number of different meanings which, through the poet's manipulation, are perceived instantaneously. In this respect, Klein's "miracle" is synonymous with Joyce's "epiphany," or Woolf's "moments of being." For the narrator of The Second Scroll (and for Klein), metaphor, which is synonymous with art, provides a means of discovering the realities beyond reality itself. Again, this points back to Klein's belief in man's creativity and his ability to unite himself to other men and to God through self-expression; as Tom Marshall says, "language is a substantial magic that can unite men in sympathy."[16] Thus, poetry is the revelation of human experience through metaphor; as the narrator says, "the poet's function is but to point direction" (pp. 82-83).

Although "Gloss Gimel," like the other glosses in The Second Scroll, remains outside the narrative *per se*, it does point to Klein's intentions in his novel, which are symbolic ones expressed in metaphor. The two air flights the narrator takes, for instance, suggest the spiritual significance behind the literal intentions of the journey:

> As the plane roared over the Atlantic, and I read and reread my uncle's letter, his enthusiasm took hold of me and I saw myself, too, as part of the great reenactment, knew myself borne to my destination, if only for a spying out of the land, "on wings of eagles." My very levitation seemed a miracle in harmony with the wonder of my time; through my mind there ran the High Holiday praise of God for that He did "suspend worlds on withoutwhat," even as my plane was suspended, even as over the abyss of recent history there had risen the new bright microcosm of Israel. (p. 39)

The physical journey across the Atlantic is a metaphor for a much larger significant pattern in the novel. Later, still pursuing Melech, the narrator describes his flight to Israel from Europe, in similar metaphoric terms:

> It was as if I was part of an ascension, a going forward in which I was drawn on and on by the multiplied imaged appearing and disappearing figure of Uncle Melech. (p. 71)

Melech is the wandering Jew, and Jewry itself; he is a creative man and the Messiah, for the Messiah is identified as the creative man who seeks and discovers God in himself. Israel is the fully symbolic expression of everyman's Utopian home.

Klein's attempt to recreate the Jewish world, past and present, affects the formal and stylistic patterns in the novel since it is finally, and significantly, the poet's (i.e., the narrator's) love of language, and the discovery he makes through words, which will enable him to transform the world. It is also Klein's love of language, and his virtuosity with it, which pervades _The Second Scroll_. In many respects, the language of _The Second Scroll_ is still the language of Klein's poetry, and as in his poetry the novel is filled with allusions and images from the Bible and from Jewish sources. At the end of "Genesis," Klein's allusion to Hitler's invasions of Poland and the smoke that billowed over the Jews in Europe for sixty years suggests, in essence, God's protection of the Jews:

> _When the years were ripened, and the years fulfilled then was there fashioned Aught from Naught. Out of the furnace there issued smoke, out of the smoke a people descended. The desert swirled, the capitals hissed: Sambation raged, but Sambation was crossed._ . . . (p. 38)

Klein's Biblical allusion suggests a reconciliation of evil with good, a suggestion which is realized at the end of the novel with the Kaddish, a mourner's prayer which exalts God and acknowledges an acceptance of His ways, rather than lamenting death. Klein's particular use of allusion develops and supports his thesis while it individualizes and particularizes his language in the novel.

Klein's exotic vocabulary, idiosyncratic syntax, and foreign idiom also result from a curious conjunction of the English, French, and Hebrew Languages. The rhetorical lilt of the syntactical structures of Hebrew create inversions such as, "when as a young boy, the consolations and prophecies of Isaiah before me, I dreamed in the dingy Hebrew School the apocalyptic dream of the renewed Zion" (p. 27). Linguistic dislocations like these combine with the high rhetoric of Biblical Hebrew, the informal idioms of Yiddish, and an inflated and imagistic use of the English language to create the sense of a poetic language and to point to Klein's central interest in the novel: like the narrator of The Second Scroll, Klein's interests are polemical and linguistic.[17] It is Klein's linguistic interests which affect the novel stylistically: the linguistic dislocations and the disparate linguistic elements in The Second Scroll along with the startling use of images and metaphors (which heighten the effect of the sound and rhythms of the novel) subject the diction to a tremendous tension. Yet, it is finally language which provides a synthesizing force in the novel; it suggests the salvation through art as exemplified in the new songs or poems of the people of the new state of Israel. Language provides the final ordering of experience and the mythic ascent to redemption. What the narrator finds in the songs of the people is a means of rising above loss; it is the imposition of an imaginative and aesthetic order to which Klein attests and on which he rests his faith.

Klein's attempt to elevate art as a metaphor for miracle, however, is problematic because it fuses secular and religious considerations: the poet's attempt at self-definition through art parallels God's desire to make Himself manifest. Through this concept of miracle, Klein attempts to draw narrative intent and symbolic motif into a formal organic unity. What, in fact, occurs is a curious alternation between a narrative and a poetic mode. Allegorical intentions and awkward interruptions by the narrator's persona defy a strictly narrative mode contingent on character and event within a causal and temporal structure, while a densely rich and poetic language diffuses the didactic outline and blurs the symbolic purpose of the form.

Unlike Smart's By Grand Central Station where a poetic mode creates the narrative, or Watson's The Double Hook which creates narrative through the symbolic function of image, Klein fails in The Second Scroll to fuse a narrative mode (and its concern with events and character bound temporally and causally) with a lyrical tendency to organize scenes and events around an unspoken thematic and emotional center in the novel. Klein's methods and purpose are like those of Uncle Melech's in the dialectical essay he had once written which had fascinated the narrator at college, and which he describes as:

> . . . a series of curious alterations between prophetic thunder and finicky legalism; often he lapsed into parody, yet here and there one would be startled by either the justness of the irreplaceable word or the daring of the high imaginative flight. (p. 26)

In the same way that Melech's talents are perceived to be "both linguistic and polemical" (p. 26), so, too, are Klein's.

In The Second Scroll, Klein attempts to liberate meaning by moving beyond consciousness; yet, he restricts himself in his use of a first person narrator. Both Smart and Watson express personal visions in their novels but in forms that enable them to move beyond the particular and the temporal. The quest of the narrator in The Second Scroll necessitates a move beyond rational consciousness, and although Klein integrates a secular and a religious quest in the image of the photograph by providing a metaphoric meeting of the narrator and his uncle, its function is mimetic and representational. The metaphoric association of art with miracle suggests a means to move beyond external reality and first person consciousness. Yet, there is no real symbolic transcendence: art may suggest an analogy to the workings of God, but it is finally located in the language of the people. The metaphor of art as miracle is not a structuring device, though its symbolic implications might point to a thematic transcendent reality within the novel's context. It is, in fact, a metaphor which works within the didactic intentions of the novel as a whole; Klein clearly works within a tradition he can elucidate.

The Second Scroll demonstrates Klein's move beyond the lyric to a more dramatic form to express a personal vision. He attempts to dramatize the myth of redemption and the allegorical or symbolic outline of the narrative suggests an archetypal quest pattern, but this is blurred both by the narrator's dramatic function, by the elaborate and extraneous glosses, and by a richly allusive and poetic language. Within the novel, there is a contrary pull between the referential and the causal, and the aesthetic. Malcolm Ross says:

> The book has its faults. For one thing it is over-compressed. While the analogical layers are always held in the grip of the intellect, while the symbol is always lucid, proper

> emotive suggestiveness is sometimes lacking. And there is a defect of the opposite kind. Sometimes the purple passage rises with disconcerting abruptness out of the hardest cerebral rock. One might say that while the skeletal structure of the book is sound and strong the flesh is unevenly distributed.[18]

The Second Scroll is an experiment in novel form; as such it departs from and challenges the conventions of the English-Canadian novel up to 1951. As well, it demarcates the boundaries between poetry and prose fiction as formal structures in its attempt to create narrative through a symbolic method. In this respect, it anticipates Cohen's symbolic novel, *Beautiful Losers*, a novel which explodes novel conventions through poetic structures. Perhaps *The Second Scroll* is the novel Virginia Woolf once envisaged:

> . . . it is possible that there will be among the so-called novels one which we shall scarcely know how to christen. It will be written in prose which has many of the characteristics of poetry. It will have something of the exaltation of poetry, but much of the ordinariness of prose. It will be dramatic and yet not a play. . . . It will give as poetry does the outline rather than the detail.[19]

II

At the time of its publication, Leonard Cohen's novel, *Beautiful Losers* (1966), was as one critic put it, "a shattering explosion of all the conventions in Canadian novel writing."[20] Although its theme suggests an archetypal search for self and self-fulfillment in face of isolation and alienation in a contemporary society, it deliberately assaults novel form and the conventions of character, event, and chronology in order to recreate a new novelistic world of magic and miracle. Cohen's method is complex: he deconstructs novel conventions in terms of their novelistic function and recreates them to function symbolically. In effect, characters and events turn into images with symbolic significance so that in a novelistic sense they are hardly recognizable. In the recreation of a world of magic and transformation, the symbolic function of character and event creates a narrative pattern which coheres through its symbolic connections, the integrity of its images, and in the central and controlling metaphor, "to fuck a saint."

In its methods and intentions, Beautiful Losers stands outside the mainstream of the English-Canadian novel, and like Watson's The Double Hook and Klein's The Second Scroll, exists in the symbolist tradition. As in Watson's novel, the narrative structure of Beautiful Losers depends upon the symbolic function of image which grounds the narrative at the literal level yet determines its symbolic mode. Similar to The Double Hook, too, is the density and integrity of the images of Beautiful Losers, which are linked to a symbolic structure that suggests a redemptive movement in the novel, beginning and ending in a framework of Indian mythology and Christian correspondences. The characters in Beautiful Losers, "I," F., Edith, and Catharine, also function in a way that is similar to those of The Double Hook. They are dramatic characters in a novelistic sense; but they are also "figures" representing abstract ideas so that their various pairings and juxtapositionings produce successive and deepening levels of meaning. In The Double Hook, Watson grounds the symbolic significance of her novel (as delineated by the central image of the central hook) in the representational. In Beautiful Losers, Cohen translates character and action directly into symbolic function to create an idiosyncratic world of his own invention. He creates a unique symbolic reality that redefines the notion of the "sacred" and mythologizes the "profane." In essence, he recreates a new spiritual reality based on the profane, the banal, and the technological. Characters and events and representational settings such as the movie theater or the tree-house lose their plausibility in traditional novelistic terms, as apotheosis takes place in a movie house (or "system theatre"), the telephone becomes magic, and characters transform into composite persona. Essentially, Cohen deconstructs a world of rationality and temporal and spatial boundaries and with it the notion of rational narrative form, as he plays off the traditional conventions of setting, character, and plot.

In this respect, Beautiful Losers represents an important development from Klein's The Second Scroll: Cohen frees himself from the demands of the narrative mode to represent the ordinary sequence of empirical events; he does not represent or depict a world, but dramatizes its creation. Tom Marshall speculates that Cohen was influenced by Klein.[21] Cohen's language, like Klein's, is rich and exotic; for Klein, however, language is the essence of poetic expression, or art, which, in turn, is a metaphor for miracle, and the means to a transcendent unification and harmony, while miracle is the revelation of God's continuing creation in the face of suffering. But it is art (a reflection of God's creation) which orders the randomness of experience into coherent patterns; thus, Klein rests his faith in the resources of language to impose an aesthetic order upon experience.

Cohen uses language in a much different way than Klein does; rather than represent an external reality subject to the rules of rationality, temporality, and causality, he creates an apocalyptic view of the world, one that denies the validity of an objective and knowable external reality, and asserts, in general, the uselessness of traditional ways of making sense of the world. In Beautiful Losers, language is severed from an external and objective world; it is a part of the internal landscape of each character as it creates an internal and personal myth. The intentional use of allusion, image, purple prose, and startling word combinations provide a connotative density to the novel's language and the means for wrenching words from their habitual context and yoking them to disparate notions as in the expression "to fuck a saint." Cohen intentionally draws attention to the language, itself functioning finally as aesthetic effect.[22]

In this respect, Beautiful Losers is an extension and culmination of Cohen's poetry established in Let Us Compare Mythologies (1956) and refined in The Spice-Box of Earth (1961). In these poems, a rich and exotic language reflects an interest in excess and extreme situations while religious and sexual vocabularies work together and intensify each other, as they do in the novel. In poems such as "To A Teacher" or "You Have the Lovers," there is a preoccupation with the relationship between a master and a slave, or a teacher and a disciple, configurations that will be dramatized in the relationships between F. and "I" and F. and Edith and "I" and Edith, in Beautiful Losers. There is also a tendency towards longer forms in these books of poems, as in the prose-poem "Lines From My Grandfather's Journal." George Woodcock perceives in these poems "the desire to find some poetic form larger in scope and physical dimension than the lyric . . . ," and he says, in this search, Cohen "turned to prose fiction and by-passed the conventional novel."[23]

Cohen's third collection of poetry, Flowers for Hitler (1964), previews his interest in larger forms in its various stylistic experiments. This collection includes a one-act play, The New Step, and a longer experimental poem, "Alexander Trocchi, Public Junkie, Priez Pour Nous," in which the structural use of the alternation of viewpoints occurs in the alternation of stanzas. This anticipates the structural use of the two voices of "I" and F. in Books One and Two of Beautiful Losers. In the formalized dramatic structures of his two novels, The Favourite Game (1963) and Beautiful Losers, Cohen moves beyond the subjectivity of the lyric to the dramatic presentation of characterization while some of the excesses in the style and language of the poetry gain particular significance in the speech habits of the particular characters in dramatic contexts. Interestingly, Cohen moves toward narrative elements in his poetry, while in his novels, he converts the novelistic elements to poetic function.

The Favourite Game is Cohen's roman à clef; as such it maintains a conventional form in the use of its first person narrator and dramatic situations bound by a temporal and linear structure. Beautiful Losers is a dramatic move beyond this first novel; it deliberately breaks the conventions of the traditional narrative mode in order to reveal an explicit identification between the spiritual and the physical, and to provide the means to escape the boundaries of time and space, and to transcend the limitations of reason, history, humanity, and mortality itself. In this respect, and as Stephen Scobie points out, Beautiful Losers is, in effect, a dramatization of the poem "You Have the Lovers" which, in turn, provides a gloss for the novel.[24] In "You Have the Lovers," the lovers as saints transcend individuality and enter a new spiritual dimension into which the disciple (the speaker of the poem) is initiated. The central metaphor of the poem, "all her flesh is like a mouth," previews F's ultimate lesson to "I," "all flesh can come." The transition of the disciple into a union with the lovers through sexual ecstasy is a smooth and easy transition in "You Have the Lovers," but the "one moment of pain or doubt" within the poem is extended and created dramatically throughout the whole of Beautiful Losers. The central character of the novel, "I" exemplifies the dissolution of the personality in search of sainthood, as he is taught by his friend and lover F. how to achieve the means to oneness, or wholeness. In "You Have the Lovers," the complete mingling of two bodies is the means by which individuality is transcended. The persona in the poem moves towards this transcended state of oneness by sexual union with the lovers:

> As you undress you sing out, and your voice is magnificent
> because now you believe it is the first human voice
> heard in that room
> The garments you let fall grow into vines[25]
> You climb into bed and recover the flesh.

The division between the flesh and the spirit is bridged by the act of love: sexuality is the means to sainthood, not an alternative. In Beautiful Losers, F's advice to "I," "to go down on a saint," brings the world of flesh and spirit together. For Cohen, a "saint" is someone who transcends the separation of the spirit and the flesh and the spatial and temporal boundaries of individuality to achieve an underlying oneness of being. The self-destruction of the self is the means by which Cohen's characters, his "beautiful losers," attain the supreme sacrifice by which they dispense with all imposed divisions and boundaries, or systems, including those of religion and sex. In the third section of Beautiful Losers, the composite figure of F. and the narrator, "I," goes down on the symbolic figure of Isis before his final apocalyptic transformation (and Cohen's final joke) into a Ray Charles film.

The central thematic conflict in Beautiful Losers between the spiritual and the physical is expressed through the opposition and fusion of the sexual and the mystical, the banal and the symbolic, and in the startling comic, yet illuminating, symbolic function and meaning of Isis, Andacwandet, Oscotarach, and the Telephone Dance. In essence, Cohen finds the way to religious ecstasy through the banal and the profane which he exploits in order to ground his narrative. In lieu of a traditional narrative structure, and continuity based on spatial and temporal boundaries, Cohen creates a symbolic structure based on Amerindian folk myths and Christian correspondences placed against a modern mythos gleaned from contemporary pop-culture. This wide mythic range is utilized for symbolic and structural purposes to fuse the banal with magic and the sexual with the spiritual.

Whereas the center of attention in the traditional novel is on the narrative elements of character and dramatic situation, in Beautiful Losers these elements are subverted to symbolic significance and function. Cohen creates narrative progression or movement by establishing fixed patterns that expand through structures of juxtapositioning, discontinuity, and the merging of two different time streams, the past and the present. Narrative progression centers on "I's" attempt to reach enlightenment through F's teachings and F's concomitant search for salvation. There is no conventional linear development of event, however, but the progression of a numbered series of sections, each reflecting an aspect of the protagonist's consciousness within a three-part structure. The first section of the novel contains the mad ravings of the unnamed narrator;

the second part comprises a long letter to "I" from F.; the third section is narrated in the third person by the mad persona who represents the composite character, IF.[26] In this way, narrative movement exists in a fixed purpose radiating from a continuum of fixed purpose where the two time-schemes come to a thematic intersection. Events occurring in the two times illuminate each other through ever increasing associations and parallels. Rather than depend on a temporal structure of cause and effect, or sequence, Cohen utilizes juxtapositioning in place of temporal and linear possibilities.[27] Thus, the novel incorporates a circular time, in which the events of the past merge with events of the present through motifs of association. When "I" begins his journal which composes Book One, F. has been dead for five years and "I's" wife, Edith, even longer. "I" has become a recluse obsessed with his wife, F., and their relationship, and with the historical figure Catharine Tekakwitha. Just as F. tells "I" to "connect nothing," Cohen, too, dispenses with the notion of linear plot and the preoccupation of cause and effect relationships.

By bypassing the notion of logic and rational order and spatial and temporal boundaries, Cohen enables his characters to exist in the novelistic sense in a specific place at a specific time, yet, they are able to merge identities into composite figures who evoke and dramatize a new religion where flesh becomes a means to the mystical. F., "I," Edith, and Catharine are grounded in the mimetic tradition, that is, they function dramatically in time: "I" writes his history of the A's, F. and Edith have an affair, and Catharine flagellates herself, yet, at the same time, they also represent the interlocking struggle between the spirit and the flesh. Literally and dramatically they struggle against each other, as well as themselves, as they seek some higher cause: the eighteenth-century Catharine Tekakwitha seeks and surrenders herself to the Catholic Church to achieve sainthood; Edith commits suicide to teach her husband a lesson; F. casts himself in the role of leader to show "I" the way to "the Promised Land" while seeking for himself a way to be free of "genital tyranny"; and "I" struggles with his study of the "A's" and seeks personal illumination and salvation. Thus, the characters exist within a narrative structure and a comic-dramatic framework, but they are also symbolic figures. The homosexual relationship between F. and "I" suggests the struggling halves of one being seeking completion; the failure of Edith and F. to achieve the great transcendent orgasm or of Edith and "I" to achieve a meaningful union reveals the effective way in which Cohen dramatizes characters who symbolically represent the dichotomies between the spiritual and the sexual. In effect, the dramatic determines and contains the symbolic.

Just as Cohen dispenses with the conventions of linear and logical sequence within his narrative by literally deconstructing time, so, too, does he deconstruct the traditional concept of character in order to transcend the limitations or boundaries traditionally imposed upon the notion of character. In Books One and Two, Cohen delineates the characters of "I" and F. respectively. But, rather than represent character, he creates it through the limited perception of the first person of "I" and F. Their perceptions of the same event change in accordance with the other's perception, and as their perceptions alter and change, so do the characters themselves. Book One reflects the tortured inner state of "I." In the same way that he is unable to write logically or comprehensively about the A's, he is unable to order his life in any meaningful or coherent way. And, in the same way he tries to make connections in his own life even though F. tells him, "connect nothing . . . place things side by side on your arborite table, if you must, but connect nothing" (p. 21). As a historian, "I" fragments history and time into neat, numerical periods, yet F. insists that historical time is not an inherent condition of reality, but, rather, a condition imposed upon it. F. insists that temporal sequence is not a necessary means of organizing history and that a sense of unity can be gained only through a reliance on emotional and intuitive perceptions, rather than on rationality and chronological order. In the course of F's teachings, "I" begins to abandon reason and logic as he realizes, "I want to be consumed by unreason. I want to be swept along" (p. 85). The writing in Book One reflects the chaos within "I" and in his life: his journal is the most convoluted piece of writing within the three sections.

Similarly, in Book Two, the long letter from F. to "I" dramatizes the character of F. The letter is written in a logical and coherent manner, despite the extravagant nature of the events he describes. The extravagant use of language reflects perfectly the flamboyant and protean personality of F. Ironically, even though F. teaches "I" he, too, is trying to put his life in order. F. is fundamentally protean, and as such he is constantly changing roles and ideas: he is, in turn, Moses, a politician, a businessman, a revolutionary, a madman, and a magician. Like "I," F. seeks a transcendent state beyond individual identity; he, too, wishes to achieve a "remote human possibility." In fact, F. tries to break his own systems of control by which he is ironically obsessed and limited. What he wants to be is a magician, although and again ironically he admits, "life chose me to be a man of facts" (p. 237). He wishes to escape the boundaries of history and time in order to achieve magic and miracle. For F. the tyranny of events allows only one way of seeing space and time; F. tells "I" that events, also, are a part of the trap of history, a tyranny from which he prays to be released: "(O Father, Nameless & Free of Description, lead me from the Desert of the Possible. Too long have I dealt with Events."[28] In essence, F. adopts a number of masks because he cannot believe in anything outside himself as he confesses in his mock prayer:

> Dear Father, accept this confession: We did not train ourselves to Receive because we believed there wasn't Anything to Receive and we could not endure with this Belief. (p. 225)

It is both fitting and comic, if not ironic, that the song F. sings is "The Great Pretender."[29]

The characters in Beautiful Losers express literally what the symbolic configurations within the text convey: the means towards transcendence is the loss of self dramatized by both the characters of F. and "I," who prepare each other for the final merging of identities. In Book One, "I" realizes, "if I'm empty then I can receive" (p. 49) and F. later asks "I," "are you disarmed and empty, an instrument of Grace? Has loneliness led you into ecstasy?" (p. 193). Only by the total loss of self can either F. or "I" achieve a transcendent state, or a "remote human possibility." At the end of Part One, "I" is on his way to illumination: he is ready to "peel off this old scab of history, gleaming like one pure triumphant drop of blood" (p. 172). As "The History of Us All" ends, "I" declares, "I grow silent as I hear myself begin to pray" (p. 180). Although "I" does not intellectually understand what F. was trying to teach him, he now intuits it fully. F's teachings have bypassed the brain and entered his being: they have already begun to transform him. The desire he now feels for Edith is an instinctive knowledge of what a sexual union with her would mean: what he now wants is the sound of "ordinary eternal machinery" as Edith and F. had experienced it in "The Telephone Dance." As Part One ends, "I" declares, "I grow silent as I hear myself begin to pray" (p. 180). At the end of Part Two, F. also has abdicated his many selves as he tells his nurse Mary Voolnd, "I'm almost broken, I've almost lost everything, I almost have humility" (p. 285). By the end of Book Two, both F and "I" are ready for transformation: "I" is ready for illumination, and F. for salvation.

The third section of the novel resolves the dramatic and symbolic implications of Books One and Two both thematically and structurally. In Part Three, linear and chronological time have been annihilated, history no longer exists, and the spatial and temporal boundaries placed on character have been transcended. The old man in the tree-house is free of time and both history and memory have been transformed into a state of timelessness or the eternal present. The man no longer recognizes time, nor does he have any idea of how long he has lived in the tree-house, except that it has been a long time. Since linear and historical time no longer have any meaning for him, the notion of sequence is also destroyed. The shift to the third person point of view suggests a move past the subjectivity of the individual perceptions of F. and "I" in the first two books, and prepares for the final visionary experience and the transcendence of all spatial, temporal, and historical boundaries that occurs in the third section. The shift to the third person also provides an objective and ironic distance from the events of Books One and Two as previous events take on greater significance and as all possibilities merge in the character of IF.[30] The amalgamation of these two characters reinforces the move beyond spatial and temporal boundaries as body and consciousness are also unified and as IF moves beyond memory, back into nature via "the tree-house of transformation." In this way, the third section of the novel, "Beautiful Losers," works as both a logical culmination of the first two sections and as a further extension of them.[31]

The amalgamation of the disparities and contradictions between F. and "I" in the character of IF parallels the configurations of the similarities and disparities of Edith and Catharine in the figure of Isis. Spatial and temporal integrity blur as the relationship between live author and dead woman is rendered imaginatively yet immediately, and as Catharine and Edith merge into one person, literally dramatizing the polarity between the spirit and the flesh. Edith is the twentieth-century ideal of plastic beauty, sexually insatiable and controlled by F., whereas Catharine is mystic and passive, seeking ecstatic release from her physical being through religious martyrdom.[32] Both Catharine and Edith are significantly associated, at different times, with "ordinary eternal machinery" (pp. 41, 258).

The character of Catharine is both symbolically and structurally important. As an ironic counterpoint to the contemporary characters, Catharine brings the two worlds, the eighteenth-century world of the Iroquois and the nineteen fifties world of pop-culture, into a symbolic configuration. "I's" search for an ideal leads him to the eighteenth-century Quebec saint and martyr, Catharine Tekakwitha. In his study of her, the two worlds collide in the narrator's mind so that the barriers between the past and the present disappear. The events of Tekakwitha's life increasingly parallel those of the present day, culminating in the degradation of Catharine wrapping herself in thorns, and the rape of Edith and F. by the D.V. These parallel events draw the two women into a symbolic union, a union that is made explicit in the unifying figure of Isis.

Both Catharine and Edith are associated with Isis. Isis is the symbol of the eternal life force, or the continuum of everything that exists in nature since she is generally associated with the Universal Mother who effects renewal and immortality of the soul.[33] Both "I" and F. identify Edith and Catharine with the figure of Isis. "I" has a vision about his dead wife in which she is being raped; the story completes itself when Edith draws the youngest rapist down to her bosom where "he lay weeping" (p. 78). This act foreshadows her behavior with Hitler at the end of the scene with the Danish Vibrator where "Edith threw her arms about his neck, pulled him to the dry bed, and cradled his famous head against her breasts" (p. 230). At this moment, Edith reveals herself to F.: when he asks who she is, she replies, she is Isis (p. 231).[34] In the first episode ("I's" vision), Edith's nipples are "magic" on the rapist's mind, and when Edith urinates, out of fear, they hear "the pure sound of impregnable nature . . . a sound so majestic and simple, a holy symbol of frailty which nothing could violate" (p. 77). What the rapists learn about Edith is that she is "no longer Other, that she [is] indeed, Sister" (p. 77). What Edith embodies, and what these men implicitly understand, is something sacred: the goddess manifests herself as "the energy of love" in the here and now. F. refers to Edith as "our perfect nurse" (p. 187) and points out to "I" that "I was your journey and you were my journey and Edith was the holy star" (p. 194).

Catharine is also associated with the Isis figure. In Part One, "I's" search for an ideal has led him to Tekakwitha; his purpose for writing his history of the A's is to "know what goes on under that rosy blanket" (p. 3). The reference is explicitly to Catharine. Further, in "I's" attempt to define "apocalyptic," he says it "describes that which is revealed when the woman's veil is lifted" (p. 126). The blonde, in the third section of the novel, calls herself Isis and wears moccasins, making the connection to Catharine explicit. In this final section, IF lifts Catharine's/Isis's veil and then goes down on her.[35] Thus, IF makes contact with "the energy of love," which, in turn, dramatizes as it symbolizes the fusion of sexuality with spiritual vision, and the banal as a means to the apocalyptic.[36] In the figure of Isis, Catharine and Edith transcend their individual personality as the extremes of sexuality and spirituality meet and "matter is made holy."

The figure of Isis is a central and unifying symbol in Beautiful Losers, and it is through the figure of Isis that the novel's metaphor to "fuck a saint" is dramatically enacted, and by which it takes on symbolic meaning. In the context of the novel, to "fuck a saint" is neither a cerebral nor a metaphysical speculation, but a powerful metaphor which is dramatically rendered through the actions of the novel's characters. Through the characters, the novel is explicit in its identification of the polarity between the religion of the spirit and the religion of the flesh; it is conceptualized and dramatized in the two female characters, Edith and Tekakwitha. The division is resolved as Catharine and Edith become one and the same person in the figure of Isis. F.'s advice to "I" "to go down on a saint" brings the world of flesh and spirit together literally as IF goes down on Isis. Yet, at the same time, this perfect equilibrium between the spirit and the flesh is an act which breaks down the barriers of possibility, the barriers between flesh and spirit and between past and present. In this way, linear and historical time cease to function as the two time schemes and the various characters meet and merge in Cohen's vision of the means to sainthood.

The metaphor to "fuck a saint" is also important in another dramatic context: F. tells "I" to "fuck a saint" and "to connect nothing" as a way of making "I" bypass conventional systems of reason and logic as well as the boundaries of history and the self to achieve a transcendent state of grace. F.'s methods of teaching are important, because unlike conventional teaching methods, which, as he reveals in his lucid account of "The last four years of Tekakwitha's life," he is capable of using, F. resorts to tactics in the form of "games," "sermons," and "pranks." F. tells "I" that "games are nature's most beautiful creations" (p. 37). F. uses these as well as the pop-culture of movies, mail-order programs, and the messages of rock and roll as an arcane system of teaching. "I" refers to F.'s "games" as "cheap koans"; he feels that F.'s teachings are "esoteric" or "baffling" although he acknowledges, "Now that I look back he seemed to be training me for something" (p. 70). In fact, F. uses the "koan" to help "I" reach enlightenment, or illumination by abandoning the intellect.[37] The most important of F.'s koans is "to fuck a saint." It is through a series of koans that Cohen reveals the world of magic in his novel; he creates an arcane system of guidance, one that depends on a number of interrelated symbols. Although F. tells "I" "to connect nothing," the unity and meaning of the novel exists in a number of central symbols which express the thematic concerns of the novel and which radiate simultaneously from what Dennis Lee appropriately calls "the Isis continuum."[38]

The symbolic patterning in the novel centers around the symbol of Isis. As a symbol, the figure suggests integration and wholeness and a redemptive process, thus functioning in opposition to the fragmentation, chaos, and lack of any clear values in Books One and Two. Isis represents the divine immanence of all things including nature, God, consciousness and instinct undifferentiated. She specifically suggests the Virgin Mary, on whom the Iroquois virgin, Catharine, models herself. In fact, by renouncing her flesh rather than receiving the sexual advances of her young Iroquois husband, she achieves a mystic vision, one that unites her with the figure of Isis:

> And as she thus disclaimed ownership of her flesh she sensed a minute knowledge of his innocence, a tiny awareness of the beauty of all the faces circled round the crackling fires of the village. Ah, the pain eased, the torn flesh she finally did not own healed in its freedom, and a new description of herself, so brutally earned, forced itself into her heart: she was Virgin. (p. 64)

The symbol of Isis further suggests the oneness of all things that had existed for the Indians in the St. Lawrence Valley before the conquest of the white man with his institutionalized religion. The new religion is responsible for the schism between the spirit and the flesh, and between consciousness and instinct. Because of consciousness, man is separated from the natural world and the belief in the phenomena of the irrational, miracles, and magic. It is finally these beliefs for which the characters in the novel search.

Cohen literally dramatizes "I's" search for unification with the natural life in Edith and F.'s rediscovery of "The Telephone Dance," a dance which the Indians had been told to forget with the arrival of the white man and his religion. With the white man's introduction of the "baptism," "a wall of silence was thrown up between the forest and the hearth":

> . . . the old people gathered at the priest's hem shivered with a new kind of loneliness. They could not hear the raspberries breaking into domes, they could not smell the numberless pine needles combing out the wind, they could not remember the last moment of a trout as it lived between a flat white pebble on the streaked bed of a stream and the fast shadow of a bear claw. Like children who listen in vain to the sea in plastic sea shells they sat bewildered. (p. 105)

With the baptism, the Indians are told, "old as you are, you must forget forever the Telephone Dance" (p. 104). The Telephone Dance is rediscovered, however, by Edith and F. in the lobby of the cinema, or system theater, while they wait for "I." It is a dance which centers itself in the mechanical apparatus of the telephone, and by which Edith and F. are transformed; they become mechanical, depersonalized, and transcendent. As F. explains to "I":

> We felt delivered, Edith and I! The telephone, hitherto so foreboding and powerful, was our friend! It was the agent of some benign electronic deity, and we wanted to praise it. (p. 39)

"I" receives the news literally, not as a revelation of divine energy through the ecstasy of the body, or as the upheaval of "genital imperialism," but as a betrayal of his marriage by his best friend and lover. Later, however, "I" is able to intuit its true and symbolic meaning: "I want those leathery electrodes in my head! I want to hear the mystery explained . . . . There were such messages going between them" (p. 34).

The incident of the Telephone Dance, like the figure of Isis, functions thematically and structurally to unify Beautiful Losers as it turns event into image functioning as a symbol. It suggests the symbolic identification of the Indian religion with the natural life, while it suggests to "I" a new understanding of holiness: sexual energy is a unifying force, and a means to transcendence. When F. hears the sound of "ordinary eternal machinery," it recalls the transcendence Catharine, who in life "Was Mangled Every Hour In Mysterious Machinery" (p. 69), experiences at her death as she enters "the eternal machinery of the sky" (p. 266). Appropriately, it also illustrates and dramatizes Cohen's use of techné as a means of transcendence; the visionary is reached through the technical and the banal.

Cohen further suggests and dramatizes the belief of man and nature and God existing as one in the "Andacwandet," or, more appropriately, "the fuck-cure," where "joined in the ancient enduring way, [is] flesh to spirit" (p. 9). Like the Telephone Dance, "Andacwandet" turns event into image functioning as symbol as it reinforces the metaphor "to fuck a saint." It dramatizes as it symbolizes the unification of the flesh and the spirit. The cure depends on the chanting of the Prayer, "I change/ I am the same," and on "the dance of the mask" which suggests the constantly changing and multifarious aspects of life, but which also suggests the divine unification of all things:

> It was a dance of masks and every mask was perfect because every mask was a real face and every face was a real mask so there was no mask and there was no face for there was but one dance in which there was but one mask but one true face which was the same . . . . (p. 167)

In another symbolic incident, Cohen dramatizes and illustrates the miraculous in the banal, in the apocalyptic nature of "the total chromatic metamorphosis" which occurs, "in a matter of minutes," after Catharine spills a glass of wine at a Jesuit banquet:

> Wails and oaths resounded through the purple hall as faces, clothes, tapestries, and furniture displayed the same deep shade . . . . The entire company, servants, and masters, had

> directed its gaze outside, as if to find beyond the contaminated hall some reassurance of a multicolored universe. Before their eyes these drifts of spring snow darkened into shades of spilled wine, and the moon itself absorbed the imperial hue. (p. 125)

"I" calls the incident "apocalyptic," which, he says, means "revelation" (p. 125). The revelation in this incident is the same kind of power which will later stem from the miracles of "Saint Catharine"; it is a power which emanates from the irrational, or the supernatural out of which miracles stem, and miracles, in essence, are magic. Like Isis, Catharine becomes known for her magic and miraculous powers of healing.

Thus magic provides the apocalyptic transformation through the banal: it is emblematic of the power of miracle and transformation; it is opposed to the power of the intellect and reason; and it provides the means by which the structures imposed by religion and the intellect are transcended. Magic is the central source of Cohen's reconstructed world. In "A Long Letter From F.," F. tells "I," "I did not know what I had to tell you, but now I know. I did not know what I wanted to proclaim, but now I am sure. All my speeches were a preface to this . . . God is alive. Magic is afoot . . ." (p. 197). He later tells "I," "here is a plea based on my whole experience: do not be a magician, be magic" (p. 207). Emblematic of the power of magic as opposed to that of the intellect is "Oscotarach, the Head-Piercer." Catharine's uncle explains to her that Oscotarach lives in a bark hut by which "his spirit body" must pass on its "long journey homeward":

> I will stand beneath him and he will remove the brain from my skull. This he does to all skulls which pass by. It is the necessary preparation for the Eternal Hunt. (p. 145)

In fact, he tells Catharine the removal of the brain is "a necessary preparation for immortality" (p. 232). Again, in "A Long Letter From F.," F. insinuates that he has acted as "I's" Oscotarach. He identifies the tree-house where "I" goes as the bark hut of Oscotarach and he tells "I" the operation is "long and clumsy" using only a blunt tomahawk. Then he asks "I," "But who could perform the operation on Oscotarach?" and answers, "when you understand this question, you will understand my ordeal" (p. 232). Like "I's" interpretation of the name Iroquois, "Hiró-Koué," which translates "Koué" as an attempt "to subvert the beguiling intellect with the noise of true emotion," the real meaning of Oscotarach's function is to break and subvert the intellect so that magic can take its place.

The Telephone Dance, Andacwandet, and Oscotarach are primary unifying symbols in Beautiful Losers which work in relation to the Isis symbol to suggest a new kind of unification between man, nature, and God; they are emblematic of the power of magic as opposed to that of the intellect. As well, they suggest the means by which to transcend the division of the flesh and the spirit and to move beyond spatial and temporal boundaries as in Part Three of the novel where linear and historical time cease to function as the two time schemes merge in Cohen's final vision to sainthood. These symbols suggest the deconstruction of a world of artificial structures and boundaries imposed on time, event, and character for a world of magic and miracle. In essence, these conventions are recast to symbolic or poetic function as a new modern mythos of techné fuses the banal with magic, and the particular with the symbolic and turns the novel directly into myth. In this world, technical apparatus like the telephone become the symbolic means of transcendence; that is, the telephone is magic and the final apotheosis takes place in the movie theater.

In Parts One and Two of Beautiful Losers, the boundaries imposed by the division of the flesh and the spirit, spatial and temporal integrity, and reason and the intellect are deconstructed and in Part Three they are transcended. In "Beautiful Losers" there is a literal as well as a metaphoric transformation and transcendence of time, event, and character as the symbolic configurations of all the characters meet and merge in Isis and IF. Once the intellect is broken, "I" and F. first undergo the transformation of the tree-house into IF, then IF undergoes an apocalyptic metamorphosis at the System Theater. The old man in the tree-house no longer recognizes time; both linear and historical time cease to function:

> . . . he scraped his memory for an incident out of his past with which to mythologize the change of seasons. . . . His memory represented no incident, it was all one incident, and it flowed too fast. . . . (p. 291)

IF further transcends spatial and temporal boundaries as he merges into the magical reality of the film and transforms into a Ray Charles movie in the System Theater. The System Theater is appropriately the place where the telephone dance takes place between Edith and F. Desmond Pacey justly calls it "the contemporary temple or cathedral" since cinema is the heart of the pop-culture and films are a contemporary manifestation of magic. It is appropriate that IF metamorphoses into a film since, as Pacey says, films have a central reintegrative power as they "preserve the past, record the present, create imaginary worlds, expand consciousness."[39] In short, films suggest the construction of new worlds and the final image of the newsreel escaping into the feature suggests the final breaking down of distinctions between fact and fiction, history and imagination, and reality and magic; in short, it is a new way to the supernatural. It is also significant that this system theater "displays the only neon failure in miles of light: dropping two letters which will never be repaired, it signals itself as stem Theater stem Theater stem Theater" (p. 279). It signifies itself as the center of the pop culture; it is the world through which logical and rational systems are broken and magic and transformation are established. In effect, the world of magic is established through the technical apparatus of the pop culture. Douglas Barbour says, "Beautiful Losers is basically concerned with a religiously apocalyptic transformation of man":

> Cohen is, however, writing out of an age when techné reigns supreme. He is, among other things, concerned to find a new way to the supernatural overworld of religious ecstasy through a thorough immersion in the banal, pop, culture which surrounds us.[40]

In this respect, the last section of the novel appropriately "has been rented to the Jesuits" (p. 306) because it is the Jesuits who believe in miracles. The Jesuits demand "the official beatification of Catharine Tekakwitha" because they believe "it is essential that the miracles sparkle again" (p. 306). They wish to extend the cult of the saint so that she may become "by the dust of her grave, the sower of miracles that she was in former times" (p. 306). Catharine is a saint because she has achieved the remote human possibility of making contact with the energy of love (in this case God) through the renunciation of the flesh. Significantly, though, in her own flagellations, Catharine is closer to Edith and F., and their experience with the Danish Vibrator, an identification made explicit in the structural juxtapositioning of the two events. It is probably not too fanciful to suggest, as Pacey does, "that in referring to the sex machine by its initials, D.V., Cohen is playfully suggesting that the surrender is not so different from the surrender to God's will or Deo Volente."[41] Appropriately, the concluding section of the novel begins in spring, the traditional symbol of rebirth. By the last paragraph of the novel, IF makes contact with the energy of love by going down on a saint: the meeting of IF and Isis suggests the amalgamation of physical ecstasy and spiritual vision. By the last paragraph of the novel IF has achieved the "remote human possibility": he has experienced the tree-house of transformation through "the fire of family and love" (p. 307), and he has transcended the self, the temporal, and the spatial by entering into the magic of the film. He is now ready to mediate between God and the reader.

Thus, in Beautiful Losers, Cohen decreates traditional narrative conventions to dramatize the archetypal search for self and fulfillment in the conflict between the spiritual and the physical and their union. By thematically and structurally opposing the sexual and the spiritual and the banal and the symbolic, Cohen depicts the decreation of one world in his literal assault on linearity, plot, and character, and recreates in its place a world of magic and miracle where body and soul and the sexual and the spiritual exist in unification. Language, which is severed from an external world and functions as part of the internal landscape of the characters, is rich in connotative density and association and continually reinforces the juxtapositioning of the sacred and the profane out of which emerges a new form resolving the tension of its opposites. The unity of the novel exists within its structural framework created in the density and integrity of its symbols and recurring image motifs, particularly those of masturbation and constipation (symbols of self-imprisonment); those of altars, temples, and baptism (symbols of worship and redemption); and those of water, birds, stars, and fish (symbols of natural life and divine perfection) which reinforce the dramatic and symbolic dichotomies of the spirit and the flesh. Furthermore, the recurring traditional Christian images of altars, temples, and baptism suggest worship and sacrifice and contrast with the images associated with twentieth-century technology suggesting the "eternal machinery of cosmic processes." Together these image motifs amplify and support the central concern of spiritual vision obtained through physical ecstasy.

In Beautiful Losers, Cohen evokes and dramatizes a new religion where flesh becomes a means to the mystical. The narrative is structurally controlled by the central metaphor to "fuck a saint" and unified in its symbols and image motifs and in its exaggerated and hyperbolic tone, a tone which not only underlines the outrageous situations, but also sets off the purple prose passages. Cohen intentionally exploits the mimetic tradition and the notion of empirical event as a means of deconstructing a contemporary world of fragmentation and shifting values, and creating in its place a new mythos, one that leads to miracle and magic, and one that turns idiosyncratic experience directly into myth. His characters exist within a narrative and a dramatic framework while they function to represent abstract ideas: their various pairings and juxtapositionings produce successive levels of meaning as they create narrative progression. Through the integrity of a network of images and associations, and the symbolic function and connection of Isis, Andacwandet, Oscotarach, and the Telephone Dance, Cohen unifies the fragments of his novel to a three-part framework that coheres at its symbolic level and in its poetic form. In Beautiful Losers, Cohen manipulates poetic conventions to create narrative as he translates narrative conventions to poetic function; like Watson's The Double Hook, it functions in the manner of a symbolic poem-novel.

In conclusion, The Second Scroll and Beautiful Losers set forth in narrative prose fiction the desire evident in Klein's and Cohen's poetry to move beyond the lyric to a more dramatic form to express a personal vision. Although the novels are stylistically different, like Watson's The Double Hook they develop a symbolic mode of patterning to create narrative, but with different degrees of success. Whereas in The Double Hook a symbolic pattern emerges from the narrative, or the dramatic representation, in The Second Scroll it is superimposed upon a conventional framework of a temporal and linear ordering of events. Both Klein and Cohen dramatize a myth of redemption; yet, in The Second Scroll, although the symbolic ramifications suggest an archetypal quest, the intentions of the novel blur as a consequence of the narrator's dramatic function, by the function of Uncle Melech, by the elaborate and extraneous glosses, and by the richly allusive and poetic language. Klein fails to fuse the narrator's literal search for his uncle with the symbolic search for Israel. Essentially, he fails to find a device to integrate the literal and the symbolic although he attempts to do this by elevating the thematic function of art as a metaphor for miracle. The metaphoric association of art with miracle suggests a means beyond external reality and the first person consciousness of the narrator. However, though art may suggest an analogy to the workings of God, it is, in essence, located in the language of the people; it is a metaphor working within the didactic intentions of the novel as a whole. Yet, the metaphor fails as an integrating and structuring device and there is a contrary pull in the novel between its dramatic and narrative functions and its poetic and aesthetic intentions.

In Beautiful Losers, Cohen succeeds where Klein fails: whereas Klein suggests the function of art is equivalent to miracle, Cohen literally dramatizes it in the conflict between the spiritual and the physical and in their final union. Cohen's characters exist within a narrative structure and a dramatic framework, yet they also function as abstract ideas whose various pairings and juxtapositionings reinforce and resolve the conflict between the sacred and the profane. Further, this central conflict is structured and controlled by the central metaphor to "fuck a saint." Language, too, is severed from an external world and functions as part of the internal landscape of the characters as it reinforces the juxtapositioning of the sacred and the profane. By thematically and structurally juxtaposing the sacred and the profane, Cohen literally dramatizes the configuration of the deconstruction of one world, in a literal assault on plot, character, and linearity, and in its place recreates a world of magic and miracle. He intentionally exploits mimetic tradition and the notion of empirical event as a means of creating the symbolic and turning idiosyncratic experience directly into myth. Cohen recreates a world of magic and miracle in a densely woven structure of symbolic association, allusion, and image motif connected to a three-part framework, out of which emerges a new form resolving the conflict of opposites. Cohen's novel makes harmonious the antithetical expectations and conventions of the narrative and poetic mode so that the reader's expectations are utilized in a new and satisfying way. Like The Double Hook, Beautiful Losers coheres beyond its spatial and temporal boundaries in its symbolic form; it recreates the novel to the function of the poem.

CHAPTER FOUR

DOUGLAS LEPAN'S THE DESERTER AND MARGARET ATWOOD'S SURFACING: METAPHORIC PATTERN AS NARRATIVE MODE

> "There will always be a place for books that are redolent of a particular region or a particular aspect of Canadian life and experience. But there will also be a place, an increasing place, I suspect, for writing which is more stripped and bare and absolute. . . ."
>
> Douglas LePan, "In the Frock Coat and Moccasins," Atlantic Monthly, vol. 214, no. 5, Nov. 1964

I.

The Deserter is Canadian poet Douglas LePan's only novel. Like Klein's The Second Scroll, The Deserter's thematic concern is with finding a viable myth of redemption. The Deserter, like Klein's novel, is also experimental, although with its roots more firmly embedded in the conventions of traditional fiction. Yet LePan's intention, much like Smart's in By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, is to fuse and ground a personal consciousness in a particular time and place. Like Smart, LePan attempts to create a personal vision through a metaphoric and allusive structure where image motifs connect the concrete with the universal and refashion the narrative line as a pattern of imagery. In Smart's novel a literal journey in a concrete and particular world is refashioned as imagery and universalized through a personal vision of love. In The Deserter, as in Atwood's Surfacing, a similar method of creating narrative occurs in the grounding of a personal vision in the concrete: a literal journey becomes both a dramatic and a metaphoric exploration of a search for wholeness.

There is a similar split within the consciousness of the first person narrator of LePan's The Deserter as there is in Atwood's first person narrator in Surfacing; this is a split between consciousness and instinct, equivalent to the dichotomy dramatized in Beautiful Losers. In Cohen's novel, the dichotomy is not only expressed dramatically, but also functions structurally and, while narrative progression is grounded in the dramatic function of the characters, it progresses through an expanding symbolic motif. In The Deserter, however, there is a curious alternation between the lyrical evocation of the narrator's expanding consciousness expressed through patterns of imagery and the literal progression of events: like Klein's The Second Scroll, LePan's attempt to fuse a poetic mode for the thematic and formal purposes of narrative falters; he fails to integrate a metaphoric structure and the lyrical consciousness of his narrator with a chain of contiguous events. In Surfacing, on the other hand, Atwood integrates a causal or chronological ordering of events with a metaphoric expression of a personal vision.

II

LePan's central protagonist in The Deserter, like Klein's narrator protagonist and the characters in Cohen's novel, is in search of wholeness and identity in the face of fragmentation and isolation and, just as Klein's The Second Scroll and Cohen's Beautiful Losers constitute thematic and structural extensions of their poetry, so does LePan's novel dramatize one of the central preoccupations of his verse. The strength of much of LePan's poetry rests in the power of certain dynamic images derived largely from the Canadian landscape which suggest a mystical awareness of the world and stand in opposition to an intellectual understanding of it, a tension which also manifests itself explicitly in his novel. His first book of poems, The Wounded Prince (1948), contains the recurring motif of the wounded prince as a fallen prophet suffering the disillusioning agonies of the war and the horrors of its wasteland. LePan's second book of poems, The Net and Sword (1953), still concerns the plight of the sensitive modern soldier in the world. One long poem in particular, "Images of Silences," epitomizes one of the central preoccupations in LePan's poetry: the recurring theme of man caught in a maze, again the central thematic preoccupation of The Deserter.[1] In both "Images of Silences" and The Deserter, there is a ~~central~~ and a unifying use of image, myth and metaphor: the informing myth is the Theseus story and the dominant image is the maze or the labyrinth.

In The Deserter, the narrative line focuses on the central informing myth of the descent into the labyrinth of the underworld. Rusty deserts the army (an act which has more important metaphorical implications than political ones) and his literal journey to the "underworld" of the city is both to hide from the military police and to search for Althea, the woman with whom he once experienced perfection in "a fallen state of Eden." Rusty's journey is also a spiritual search for meaning and wholeness in face of life's overwhelming sense of meaninglessness and disorder. Rusty sees Althea as a vision of perfection, one which will take him to the point of despair in his attempt to find her again. In the course of his search for Althea, however, Rusty meets Anne and Steve, new friends who help him to learn to accept the imperfections of the world.

The significant action in The Deserter is not external, but internal: the tension and conflict between a vision of perfection and knowledge of a fallen reality exists within Rusty's consciousness. Although he premeditatively deserts the army, his decision to do so is only metaphorically important as it demonstrates and dramatizes a universal myth. Rusty, who "has cast his uniform away," descends to the underworld, but ultimately returns to community and the world of social obligations with a new understanding of himself and the world. In effect, Rusty's search and journey represents the mythic pattern of separation, initiation, and return; it provides LePan with a structuring principle enabling him to create a particular journey grounded in the concrete world, but at the same time imbued with suggestive significance.[2]

In a sense, Rusty's desertion is from a world that has failed him; his decision to "light out" leads him to search again for the perfect union with Althea. Rusty finds with Althea what "I" seeks in Beautiful Losers, a sense of unity and spiritual fulfillment experienced through sexual union. For Rusty, the union is "an illumination that would have been inhuman had there not come with it a smell of the sea from the estuary to the east, that flowed, still tidal, fecund with brine and spawn."[3] By implication this is a spiritual union, although bound to an external and concrete world; it is an experience that alters Rusty's life, "now turning on a new centre, sphere after sphere after sphere all whirling about that point of perfect stillness" (p. 20). Once Rusty loses Althea, however, and with her the meaning she has brought to his world, he descends literally into a primitive, instinctive world in defiance of the rational, yet to him, now meaningless world. For Rusty, there is no meaning in a world without the meaning Althea gives to it. It becomes merely a "world of schedules and obligations," a world represented by his friend, Mark, now an established civil servant. He attempts to explain to Mark what Althea has given him:

> . . . after a while he was telling him about Althea and about entering a world that he had always dimly apprehended but had never known before; and about losing it, being exiled from it; and about setting out to look for it again; and about not knowing what it was he was seeking and then simultaneously discovering and being inundated, engulfed, stupefied by the discovery until he could hardly support it, knowing he was irrevocably separated from what he had lost; and about the pressure gradually relaxing but leaving him listless and groggy and surrounded by more and more patches that seemed entirely without meaning. (p. 187)

Thus, Rusty's escape into the underworld is an escape from a world without Althea, a prosaic world of facts, to a world where facts, schedules, and obligations are meaningless. It is a world of darkness, vice, and crime inhabited by "nocturnal creatures, nightwalkers all of them."

LePan does not depict detailed descriptions of time, place, and character; rather, he suggests them. Time is created through the changing seasons: the events of the novel occur within a diurnal season; Rusty escapes from the army in the fall and returns to the world of social obligations and responsibilities in the spring. The pattern suggests the archetypal cycle of dark to light, from death to life. Symbolic time, then, encompasses and surmounts linear time as Rusty moves through his days and nights from one part of the city to the next. The seasonal movement and the contingent suggestion of a symbolic time is reinforced by the novel's imagery, the movement from light to dark and back to light. As well, the city, the setting in which the action takes place, is never specifically identified despite an accumulation of descriptive detail: the city could be any city since it is only significant as a large and impersonal structure against which the events of the novel occur, and which contains within it both the underworld of crime and Mark's bureaucratic world of structures.

Characters, except for Rusty, also lack individuality. The general characteristics by which they are depicted suggest they are to be recognized not for their unique personalities but for their symbolic identities. W. C. Lougheed suggests Rusty's physical and spiritual self-absorption evokes Narcissus while Althea evokes Aphrodite.[4] F. M. Watt, too, in his introduction to the novel, points out the significance of Althea's name as healer.[5] In any case, both point to symbolic representation in characterization. As well, Anne, the woman whom Rusty befriends and who is symbolically set apart from Althea, has been contaminated by the world; her precarious mental state signifies the world's imperfections, and an emptiness and sterility in life Rusty is unable to accept. Rusty, on the other hand, is more individualized as a naturalistic character: LePan centers his interest in the novel in the psychology of his central character. Yet, while Rusty is characterized as a sensitive and perceptive individual responding to the world around him, the other characters are really dramatic representations of abstract ideas rather than fully individualized characters.

In the same way that the characters and the setting have both a mimetic and metaphoric significance, so too does the narrative progression within the novel. Rusty's descent to the underworld is a literal one, yet it is also a metaphoric defiance of the order and rationality he sees in the external world of obligations and contracts. It represents a descent to the primitive and the irrational; the underworld is a cave which "seemed to be heaving with smoke and flames and vatic giddiness and the thud of drum heads being slapped, slapped" (p. 158). The inhabitants of the cave are appropriately seen by Rusty as animal-like:

> Faces were slashed and scarified by black lines and chalk-white reflections, while above their heads stalked larger forms, shadows larger than life, furry or horned or antlered, crowning them, cresting them, almost brushing the ceiling. It might all have been a cave where primitive men had returned in triumph from the hunt and were now feasting in secure glee and defiance. (p. 154)

The cave represents the dark underside of the soul, and the play of the images of light and dark reinforce the metaphoric implications.

In The Deserter, narrative progression is dramatized literally as Rusty moves between the world of public responsibility and private sensibility. Yet, the real action is internal and develops in accordance with Rusty's inner feelings which are themselves revealed through the imposition of controlled images on his inner speech. Thus, narrative progression develops through a mosaic of images, particularly those of dark, light, animals, sun-dials and spheres. Structurally this creates a series of intense scenes, centering on what Virginia Woolf calls "moments of being" and LePan calls "moments of universal luminosity." The transitions between such moments are accomplished through recurring images of circles, spheres, globes, and sundials, which, in turn, relate these moments to an objective and external reality. Yet, in essence, the image motifs function in context to amplify the prose statements of the narrative and provide a means for depicting a consciousness in search of redemption in a world of social obligations and contracts. Ultimately, however, they are not integrated into a linear and time-bound plot, but rather are disproportionately imposed upon it.

Specifically, the images of light and dark pervade the novel and unify it. When Rusty "lights out" or deserts the army, he searches for Althea again, who now represents perfection, a perfection associated with light and which Rusty strives to regain: "a perfection he had known once but had lost" (p. 107). What Rusty wants is "to recapture the avalanche of light and bind himself to it indissolubly, to take paradise by storm, to reenter it triumphantly" (p. 108). Yet, light also suggests daylight and is therefore associated with the rational while dark suggests the cave of the underworld and the other unknown parts of the psyche. Rusty sees the conflict within himself in the specific terms of the conflict between dark and light; Mark also admits, "I know I'm split into two hemispheres light and dark" (p. 56). Rusty recognizes that only with the reconciliation of these two forces can he achieve harmony and balance within himself. He tells Mark, "I try to bind them together, though, so that I won't be destroyed" (p. 56). Rusty also acknowledges the importance of his descent to the underworld in terms of the same images of dark and light:

> It reinforced his sense of the light and dark in himself to sink underground and sit withdrawn and musing and then to emerge into a completely different environment, stirred and quickened, it might be by lights and signs and traffic. (p. 168)

The tension created by the interplay of the images of light and dark reinforce and underline the opposition between a primitive and instinctive world as represented by the underworld, and the world of the mind and intellect based on facts and reason as represented by the bureaucracy of Mark's world. Moreover, the conflict is representationally dramatized as Rusty moves between his night work at the shipyard and his days spent with his friends in the underworld. The opposition is figuratively reinforced by Rusty's own view of his underworld friends Brandy and Dragon:

> . . . they seemed, standing there together, immensely animal and primitive, one with as sleek a coat as a stag or a roebuck and the other bear-like in his black thick-set shagginess. (p. 142)

The animal imagery suggests a primitive and instinctive world which exists in opposition to a lost and perfected world, a lost Eden suggested by the image of the circle and its variations.[6] For Rusty, the "crystal sundial" or "the sphere of crystal" represents an object of perfection containing in it all the elements of the world as suggested by the astrological images of "the bull, the ram, the crab, the lion, the scales and all the rest--embossed on it" (p. 32). More than a beautiful object, the sundial also signifies a symbolic connection between the past and the present:[7]

> However it worked exactly, it lived in his mind as a great eye lying in the grass and absorbing as much of the heavens as the orb of the eye could hold. Silently marking the passage of time, it also drew together the architecture of the eye and the architecture of space, fusing them in a radiance that was bright and blue and powdery. (p. 32)

The image of the crystal sundial first appears to Rusty in a dream during a period of despair:

> It seemed to be a large sphere turning slowly in the dark and with light glimmering faintly round its shoulders. As his closed dreaming eyes unfolded it, it was a sphere of crystal . . . . (pp. 130-31)

In his dream, the crystal sphere transfigures into "a number of spheres, falling like tears, like globes . . . . then the intensity became more moderate and what shone out from his dream was a great single crystal sphere" (p. 131). As the dream progresses and changes:

> The one great sphere faded, and its place was taken by what seemed to be a whole system of spheres as far as could be judged from a patch of green curving iridescence here or from faint silvery movement somewhere else like the shimmer of propeller-blades. But this time, instead of hanging in a cluster, the spheres were all centered on one point and seemed to turn and move together, rippling out in perfect stillness. (p. 131)

This "point of stillness" recalls the "point of stillness" Rusty had experienced with Althea, now representing the vision of perfection that haunts him: "it hung over the docks and the ships and the warehouses with the persistence of an illusion" (p. 132).

The light of the crystal sundial is omnipresent, at night pervading the darkness of the city. Rusty's friend Brandy refers to it as "a great big nonsense of a thing," but for Rusty it is symbolic, not only of his idea of perfection, but also of the order, form, and beauty man is able to construct out of fragmentation and chaos. For this reason, the literal destruction of the sundial represents the shattering of this ideal:

> It was only with the destruction of the sundial that the ground beneath him began to shiver and crack in all directions. No one knew who was responsible for it. (pp. 241-42)

And once again, following the news of the destruction of the sundial, Rusty dreams of "crystal orbs":

> It was the breaking of the sundial itself that affected him. That night it came to him again--crystal orbs slowly turning and weeping, moonily brightened and then darkened by passing

> clouds and then brightened again, a standard round which globes were clustered, and then one great globe into which all the others had dissolved, revolving above him, around him, within him, a whole system of globes as clear and watery as tear-drops but heavy as the world. (p. 243)

The dream of orbs is again symbolic for Rusty who is "incorporated in their perfection. Any shiver through them threatened him, too" (p. 243). At the end of this dream the spheres fracture; "they were breaking, they were tearing him apart" (p. 244). The dream is particularly significant in that it foreshadows another moment when Rusty will experience an epiphanous insight, leading him to understand that the world encompasses both perfection and imperfection within its sphere:

> He was treading down carnage and triumph and defeat, he was going through a heavy door, he was climbing to pure starry quiet, the sky was embracing gleaming petals, there was nothing but stillness, stillness folded about white limbs. A point of perfect stillness. Still spheres revolved around him slowly. A perfection he could never re-enter. But that, he was sure, that irresistibly, was what he had been born to witness to. Those were his orders, to witness to a paradise he had known once and could never recapture, to bring that freshness into the city (without it there could be nothing but broken branches, bleached bones littering the plain) . . . . (p. 275)

Although the perfection Althea brings to Rusty disappears, a vision of perfection remains within him despite what he learns in the underworld of disorder, brutality, and a primitive and anarchistic lust for life and freedom. Through the death of his friend Steve (another deserter), he also learns that the instinctive lust for life and freedom can be destructive without restrictions and restraint. The meaningless destruction of the sundial is symbolic of this force and Steve's death is a literal consequence of it.

It is Steve's death that finally forces Rusty to face the fact of death and to question the meaning of his own existence. What Rusty learns from both his friends Anne and Steve is a self-affirmation in the face of futility and disorder. He also learns that the value of life lies less in its perfections or imperfections than in love. For Rusty, this understanding comes as a "kind of miracle" which frees him from despair and precipitates his final vision, or moment of universal luminosity:

> And now inexplicably, he was laughing. And something was tearing and breaking. Films and veils and invisible spheres and membranes were being torn to shreds, The skies were being torn open to their full darkness and distance. And he was laughing and treading exultantly over the lustrous tattered fabric as they came raining down, laughing in a shower of fading irised crystal. There would always be the taste of perfection in his mouth; he would never be rid of it, he would never recapture the source from which it came; sometimes it might lead him to folly, sometimes it might lead him to wisdom and rare transitory triumphs. (p. 297)

His realization is reinforced by the voices of Steve and Anne which "were being carried to him on the wind, their courage was being added to his, they were breathing, were shouting through him" (p. 298). It is finally "the vehemence of their breath" that forces Rusty to the culmination of his vision:

> . . . he was a trumpet and was helping to tear the last vestiges of illusion to tatters . . . . And now finally he felt something else tearing and breaking. The crystal vial in his heart that had supported all those circling spheres--the strong muscles of his heart were breaking it at last, the precious iridescent drops were spreading, spreading, were trickling everywhere along his nerves and tisues [sic]. Still he exulted. For nothing was lost. Perfection was being broken through his common dying clay. (p. 298)

The final image of the "crystal vial" works in conjunction with the images of circles, spheres, tears, bubbles, and the sundial to establish a pattern of images within the text which function, in context, to amplify the prose statements of the narrative while creating a series of related moments. The image of the sundial grounds the narrative in the concrete world while it symbolically expresses the internal action of the shifting consciousness. In this way, LePan points to the significant conjunction of Rusty's private sensibility and the appropriate facts of the outer world. Images fuse the internal life with the outer world through an internal mental act. This method grounds symbols such as the sundial with the significant images of circles into symbols meaningful to the inner consciousness. These same images also provide the means to the moments of insight, of "universal luminosity," which to a large extent determine both the lyricism of the novel and its structure. At such moments, time becomes almost a subjective phenomenon: psychological time as opposed to chronological or historical time predominates.

In effect, the reiteration of the images of spheres, circles, sundials, and the crystal sundial becomes an intrinsic structural device in The Deserter. More than suggesting a mood or a situation, the images provide the means to the character's private (i.e., inner) experiences. As a structuring device, however, the circle images are only partially successful in unifying the inner experiences of the protagonist with the external reality. Although the images provide interrelated moments of wholeness and unity and impose a pattern on the narrative progression, in the larger context of the novel, they remain unrelated, imposed rather than organic images. Instead of fusing and unifying an external world with an individual consciousness, they merely develop and amplify the prose statements of the novel.

The image of the city as a labyrinth, too, is only partially developed as a central controlling and integrating symbol. Rusty perceives the city as a convoluted maze that contains within it the various worlds and people he encounters. He sees the city as "a pure reflector where human hazards and miseries would be deposited like gold foil" (p. 181). The city is a labyrinth that encompasses the opposing world of light and dark, instinct and reason, represented by the underground world and Mark's world. As well, it contains both the individual consciousness and the external world. Yet, as a possible integrating and structural device, it is undeveloped and remains an amorphous construct that pervades the novel as a backdrop against which Rusty's changing consciousness unfolds.

In effect, the drama of The Deserter is contained specifically within the verbal substance of the narrator's interior speech; in consequence, the narrative progression within the novel evolves structurally through a series of intense scenes centering on highlighted and particular moments. Transitions between these moments occur through the use of reiterative images, and, in effect, unify the narrative line. Although LePan sifts the life of the novel through one sensibility, there are, nonetheless, inappropriate intrusions of LePan's own voice subsuming the protagonist's consciousness.[8] This occurs, for example, when Rusty and his underground companions discuss their ideas and feelings about the nature of perfection. The different voices of the characters: Rusty, Tim, Bud, Brandy, and Dragon, are highly stylized projections of the author's own voice evident in the obtrusive parallel structure which introduces each of the different character's thoughts with "'It was perfect,' said Tim"; "'It was perfect,' said Bud"; "'No it was never perfect,' said Walter"; "'There is nothing perfect,' said Brandy"; and, "'Why make such a fuss about perfection?' said Dragon."[9] Evident, too, are obtrusive slips between what is supposed to be the central protagonist's consciousness and one that is the author's own poetic voice:

> But paradise exists, said Rusty, it must. Once you have known it, you can never deny it. That stillness I still remember. Limbs glistening like petals in the moonlight. Light spiralling outward. A fragrance of hay and honeysuckle. A perfection tangled--that's strange!--in flesh, in lips and brows, caught there, a bird caught in the rigging. When you are least expecting it, to come on it by surprise like wild honey hidden in a tree. In a tree that will rot. Althea! I knew heaven with you once and can never forget it. It exists. It exists. Freshened by dews . . . but then clouds over . . . disappears . . . a garden (You can build nothing there) and not a city . . . . a garden that fades . . . fades; but leaves resplendent behind it unfading peacock dreams that, feathering and fanning out on the roof of the cave, re-echoing greens and purples, have eyes to watch whether we will betray them. I am pierced. I dream of my dreams, watching the eyes that watch. (pp. 163-64)

The effect in this case is an artificial imposition of images upon the mind's speech. This would be effective if all the action within the novel were refashioned as a pattern of imagery, and the hero's vision was finally a symbolic one. However, narrative progression within the novel proceeds not only through the poetic or lyrical evocation of Rusty's developing consciousness, but, also, through a literal progression of events. Tom Marshall justly points to "a curious and sometimes rather jarring movement back and forth between quite straightforward narrative and poetic splendour."[10]

LePan is finally more concerned with creating the changing states of consciousness within his central protagonist than depicting a detailed illusion of reality, of specific time and place. An evocative language created through a close texture of recurring images comprises the primary means of narrative development; yet the images fail to coalesce in a final symbolic form because they exist in opposition to a straightforward narrative. Rusty fails to achieve true "universal luminosity" because LePan fails to eliminate enough realism from his story to allow the poetic to be the dominant mode. While the traditional mythic pattern of the quest theme and the myth of redemption serve to move the narrative from the particular to the universal, the final function of this mythic structure illustrates a move, on the protagonist's part, from the love of earthly things to the love of universals and back again to the love of mortal particulars. Ultimately, the love of heaven or perfection is replaced by the love of persons in a perishing imperfect world. Yet unlike Smart, who fuses a metaphoric structure to a concrete external reality in By Grand Central Station, LePan utilizes a poetic mode of patterning narrative that is not concomitant with an opposing narrative mode. Although the narrative line of the novel moves through modes of perception depicted as imagery and culminating in moments of insight, LePan fails to integrate this pattern of imagery with the narrative partly because he fails to develop an internal integrating device. Neither the image of the sundial nor that of the city are sufficiently developed; consequently, they fail to reconcile the novelist's need for a concrete world and the poet's heightened insight. The poetic patterning within the novel is disproportionately imposed and stylistically inconsistent.

The Deserter belongs to the twentieth-century modernist tradition of fiction, particularly in its concerns with social and cosmic alienation, in its concerns with guilt, and in its search for a viable myth of redemption. Marshall identifies LePan as the first notable Canadian poet-novelist of the 1960's:

> Because of his concern for "universal luminosity," his development of the interrelated themes of community, achievement of wholeness and identity, and the role of the "primitive" in these avoids any reference to Canada. But his "myth" of duality, fragmentation and a possible reintegration of self and community is consistent with those of the younger poet-novelists who do write overtly of Canada, particularly with Beautiful Losers which is also concerned with light and dark, spirit and senses, insanity and vision, goddesses and primitive power, and with Surfacing, in which the notion of a self and a country trapped under water, unrealized but potential, is implicit.[11]

In The Deserter, the schism between dark and light and instinct and consciousness is expressed thematically within the consciousness of the central protagonist, whereas in Beautiful Losers it functions structurally, determining the novel's preoccupation with the separation of the spirit and the flesh. Similarly, in Atwood's Surfacing, the central protagonist searches to unify the divided factions of instinct and consciousness on a personal, social, and political level. Atwood's novel, like LePan's, reflects a linear sequence of events, but through a first person voice. Like LePan's narrator, the central protagonist in Surfacing descends, literally in her dive, in search of her missing father, and metaphorically in search of personal completeness. However, in Surfacing, the thematic metaphor of drowning and surfacing works metaphorically to provide the literal narrative with a controlling framework and a symbolic enlargement to Atwood's vision.

II

Unlike The Deserter, Surfacing is a recreation of the quest theme that successfully integrates a private and an external world. The unravelling of the mystery of the narrator's father's disappearance enlightens the narrator, as the concomitant unravelling of her own mystery provides her with the "redemption" she seeks.[12] These two quests intersect and become one when the narrator recognizes "it was no longer his death but my own that concerned me."[13] The power of the novel rests in the tension created between the concrete and the particular world of Northern Quebec (to which the narrator returns in search of her father) and an increasingly metaphoric vision of the world. There is a subtle shift in the novel, from a real, perceivable, and concrete world to a metaphoric and mythic one as the narrator's journey to the wilderness forces her to confront her own darkness and self. The journey is a dramatic as well as a metaphoric exploration of the disintegration and reintegration of her self.

Surfacing is spare, metaphoric, and moves towards myth; yet it is a fictional narrative that embodies the conventions and expectations of the novel. The merging of an external reality with an inner reality is accomplished by a shift from the dramatic or mimetic representation of reality through discursive language to a metaphorical representation suggested through poetic image and metaphor. In essence, Surfacing maintains the external form and plot of narrative fiction, but converts them to poetic image and metaphor as a narrative mode gives way to a poetic one.

The thematic metaphor of drowning and surfacing is reenacted literally and metaphorically in Surfacing; as a metaphor, it provides the narrative with a controlling mythic framework, which, in turn, provides the symbolic enlargement of Atwood's vision. In this respect, Surfacing is a thematic and structural extension of Atwood's poetry. In Surfacing, she synthesizes as she dramatizes a number of motifs that dominate her poetry, including the elusiveness and variety of language, the continuum of human and animal life, the significance of one's heritage, victimization, and drowning and surviving. George Woodcock, in an article on Atwood, "Poet as Novelist," states, "the capillary links between her poetry, her fiction, and her criticism are many and evident."[14] Sherrill Grace in her full-length study of Atwood similarly points out that "despite the larger structure of narrative, her stories and novels resemble her poems not only in theme and symbol, but in tone, point of view and voice."[15] Atwood's prevalent themes and her interest in fictional techniques are evident even in her early poetry.[16]

As early as The Circle Game (1966), Atwood creates a myth similar to that in Surfacing, the myth of duality. In poems such as "The Settlers" and "The Explorers," she views the self as trapped yet struggling to break free into an existence that is at once harmonious and independent. There is an attempt to move back to the primitive roots of one's being, back to the elemental life of the earth, the water, rocks, and trees, a motif that prefigures the narrator's "transformation" in Surfacing. There is also a repetitive suggestion of change, mutation, and metamorphosis, particularly the desire for a fusion between the mind and the body. Metamorphosis and transmutation become the means and access to a time and space where the restrictions of time and place and boundaries collapse. In part three of Surfacing, the narrator symbolically destroys the imposition of all artificial material boundaries as well as those of time and space to become one with nature.

In Atwood's poetry, a primitive, non-linear, and pluralistic state of being exists; the poet's realization is that the only difference between a random world and a structured one is the imposition of form.

An important pattern that emerges in the poetry and becomes in Surfacing a Utopian alternative to alienation, isolation, and temporality is the breaking down of reason and rational categories to reach a transcendent state of wholeness. In essence, this is a mythic pattern which necessitates a descent or fall into another form as a means of coming to terms with temporality and the division of the body and the soul. The structural framework of myth and ritual involves a return to nature through metamorphosis. In the poem "A Soul, Geologically," transformation goes beyond the tangible world and the lines "You are the wind/ You contain me" suggest an identification with the elements. These lines prefigure the narrator's transformation to an elemental state of being in Surfacing, and portend, "I am a thing in which the trees and animals move and grow, I am a place" (p. 181). Here, there is a total liberation of body and soul, what Ladousse calls "the protean aspects of metamorphosis."[17] The narrator herself refers to it as "the energy of decay turning to growth, green fire" (p. 168). Apparent also and related to a primitive and pluralistic state of being is the continual metamorphosing of one form of life into another. In Surfacing when the narrator recalls the dead heron she stumbled upon, she acknowledges, "by now it will be insects, frogs, fish, and other herons" (p. 168).

Atwood's concern with language is also apparent fairly early in The Animals in that Country (1968). Language functions in the same way as fixed forms and imposes certain boundaries on man; it makes him a prisoner insofar as it excludes him from communication with other forms of life, or, for that matter, with people of other languages. In "Notes from Various Pasts," the speaker finds language increasingly difficult to understand, or even to use. The absence of language implies a state in which the problems of communication are overcome, which the narrator believes occurs in Surfacing. Ladousse says:

> There is a continual association in Atwood's poetry between images of metamorphosis and images of a pre-linguistic state, or at least a state in which the signs of language are no longer recognisable to man.[18]

Language is a key motif in Atwood's poetry; in Surfacing it is similarly important to the narrator's increasing alienation and, later, in her redemption as she comes to realize "a language is everything you do" (p. 129). It is also important in the way it works to create a particular voice and tone. The individualistic use of voice in Power Politics (1972) reechoes in Surfacing; in the poems of this book and in Surfacing, the voice is cold, controlled, anesthetized, while a dark and caustic wit reveals a similar sense of the macabre latent within the mundane. In Power Politics, the division into the stereotypes of masculine and feminine, and the intellectual and the emotional explicitly denies the underlying unity of life. In Surfacing, the relationship between the narrator and her lover, Joe, invokes and recalls the tension of the oppositions between man and woman in the combative world of Power Politics. In general, the concerns of these poems are similar in many respects to those of Surfacing. Atwood probes man's attitude to an unstable and treacherous universe while she questions the psychological basis and the value in human relationships and the nature of man's individualism.

The poems in You Are Happy (1974) implicitly suggest a narrative impulse; they exist sequentially, but there are metaphoric connections between them. Sherrill Grace suggests a reflexive reading of the poems ("moving back and forth through the poem's images") needs to complement a linear reading.[19] The movement in this group of poems is towards a serial structure and extended form.[20] The last poem in the book, Circe/Mud Poems, contains what Grace calls a "skeletal narrative" of the mythical Odysseus and Circe.[21] Atwood's treatment of this classical myth and her interest in the idea of transformation extend beyond the use of the materials of traditional myth to the transformation process itself. The use of traditional myth and the transformation motif give the poem a dimension that enables Atwood to stress the nature of her character's change and growth. Her interest in women who attempt transformation is repeated again in her extended poem sequence The Journals of Susanna Moodie (1972) and in her novel Surfacing.

The five prose poems in You Are Happy, several of which are concerned with the idea of story, indicate Atwood's growing interest in longer forms and in narrative.[22] In both You Are Happy and True Stories (1981), Atwood neutralizes the distinctions between poetry and prose in her poem sequences and prose poems; by so doing she begins to capture the element of continuity expected in fiction. In her book-length sequence The Journals of Susanna Moodie, a linear and sequential patterning of the poems establishes narrative progression and continuity; the repetition of particular images and their metaphoric intentions create thematic and structural coherence and unity. As in the "Circe/Mud Poems," these poems depend on a mythic structure for resonance and meaning, but unlike the Circe/Mud Poems, the poems in The Journals move from the world of men to a new myth. The shift in The Journals is from a perceivable and concrete world to a mythic one. The transformation motif is thematically and structurally manipulated as an historical subject gains mythic proportions. In The Journals, Atwood employs a Canadian tradition to create a compelling articulation of a "new" Canadian myth in a dramatic reincarnation of the past.

Within the sequence of The Journals of Susanna Moodie, Susanna Moodie changes from an historical character to a woman who represents the state of the Canadian psyche. Her journey is synonymous with the discovery of the self and of the place she has come to inhabit. In essence, the character of Moodie becomes an objective correlative for the poet's thoughts and emotions; the sequence is a fusion of personal vision and moral dilemma grounded in a cultural perspective and fully particularized in the historical person of Susanna Moodie. Atwood begins with history and gradually reveals the mythic dimension of her subject.[23] She illustrates classical myth, but roots it in a concrete and particular Canadian reality; the dualities she has previously explored in terms of the classical tradition and evident from her first short book of poems, Double Persephone (1961), are translated to the Canadian tradition; Persephone is now Susanna Moodie. In this way, Atwood duplicates mythic themes and plot to create a Canadian myth that works in combination with a colloquial language and with contemporary references: myth functions as an informing and structural device.

Atwood's novel Surfacing is a culmination of the themes of her poetry in general and further explores and extends her interest in narrative and fictional prose forms.[24] Already familiar is Atwood's search for unity in the face of fragmentation and division. This particular dilemma is now placed in a specifically Canadian tradition and setting; like Watson in The Double Hook, Atwood attempts to resolve the paradoxes of self and perception in terms of the dual forces in life and nature.[25] The narrator in Surfacing is aware of a dual nature within herself and expresses this in terms of her own fragmentation:

> . . . I didn't know when it had happened. I must have been all right then; but after that I'd allowed myself to be cut in two. Woman sawn apart in a wooden crate, wearing a bathing suit, smiling, a trick done with mirrors. I read it in a comic book; only with me there had been an accident and I came apart. The other half, the one locked away, was the only one that could live; I was the wrong half, detached, terminal. I was nothing but a head, or no, something minor like a severed thumb; numb. (p. 108)

Later, this graphic image of division and fragmentation is particularized in the image of her aborted child, "it was taken away from me, exported, deported. A section on my own life, sliced off from me like a Siamese twin, my own flesh cancelled" (p. 48).

As in The Journals, the narrator in Surfacing discovers her own interior darkness by undergoing a violent experience in the wilderness. As in The Journals, too, Surfacing presents a metaphoric exploration of the disintegration and reintegration of a psyche that has become divided. Surfacing, in fact, explores a territory very much like that of The Journals; in each, a transformation points the way to self-knowledge, a movement which takes place on an inner psychological level as well as on a quasi-physical one. In the course of The Journals, Moodie becomes the spirit of the Canadian wilderness she once hated. When she dies, she is transformed, like her dead children, with the land: she embodies a mythical vision buried under the Toronto streets. In Surfacing, there is a subtle shift from a concrete, particular, and perceivable world to a mythical one, also. In Surfacing, as in The Journals, too, landscape becomes the geography of the mind; it is the objective correlative of the narrator's own state of mind.[26]

Generally, in her poetry, Atwood pays specific attention to the significance of event and pattern. Thematically, there is a similar preoccupation in Surfacing, one that reflects a stability or order that is deceptive and destructive, and which threatens both natural life and the individual psyche. There is an imminent sense of evil located, specifically, by the narrator in the impingement of Americans and American culture on Canadian life. For the narrator, their particular threat is the violation of the Canadian wilderness, a threat that is particularized in the image of the dead heron, "hanging upside down by a thin blue nylon rope tied round his feet and looped over a tree branch, its wings fallen open" (p. 115). The narrator places the blame on "the Americans" who need "to prove they can do it, they had the power to kill" (p. 116). For the narrator, the Americans represent the antithesis of nature and her illusion that the wilderness has no power to recover from the Americans' violation parallels her inability to overcome her own sense of personal violation following an abortion. The narrator sees herself as having been violated by nameless and destructive men, but, just as the Americans ironically turn out to be Canadians, so too is their destructiveness the narrator's own, as she acknowledges:

> I felt a sickening complicity, sticky as glue, blood on my hands, as though I had been there and watched without saying No or doing anything to stop it: one of the silent guarded faces in the crowd. (p. 130)

By holding on to the illusion that she is a victim, that she is helpless and "they" do things to her, she avoids confronting herself, and because she has lost the ability to feel or act she is unable to come to terms with what she feels has been a violation of her body and soul. In the end, it is the wilderness that provides the revelations which will release her own power. The heron strung up on the tree provides the narrator with her first revelation which gives her the knowledge she requires to escape her passive sense of victimization. Upon seeing what she considers to be a sacred object of nature stupidly brutalized, the narrator realizes her own passivity is not, in fact, innocence: by refusing to act she immerses herself in the same evil. Her admission of complicity is the first step in a journey that begins as a search for her father and ends as a journey into the self. The search begins with the narrator's alienation and isolation from her own self and community, and ends as she finds integration within herself and, at least, a realization of the need to integrate herself into a larger social community. What begins as a search for her lost father becomes a quest for the hidden source of personal identity which connects in some way to the external world. To get to this point, however, the narrator finds it necessary to transcend the ordinary limitations of consciousness.

III

Appropriately, Surfacing is divided into three parts; each part presents a stage in the narrator's search for her father, and a further stage in the search for herself. Time moves in a linear and chronological fashion until the scene of the transformation when it is suspended. The narrative moves horizontally, or forward in time, and vertically into the past as it parallels the narrator's descent into the lake, and into herself. As the narrative progresses through the mind of the narrator and deeper into her past and psyche, external surroundings blur and the present recedes. At this point, the pattern of the narrative resonates with mythic and metaphorical significance; as the title suggests, it recreates the ascent-descent pattern of the Persephone myth.[27] The structure of the novel and its thematic revelance emerges from the mythic quest paradigm. The drowning metaphor, which is central to the novel, and the cluster of images concerned with disease, mutilation, death, and dead foetuses deepens and extends the mythic structure as the narrator encounters her dead father.

Thus, in the three-part structure of Surfacing, the literal and representational function of the conventions of the novel are converted to metaphor while they maintain a novelistic or dramatic reality. The literal journey which the narrator takes becomes a metaphoric and psychological journey. The physical setting, in general, also functions to suggest the narrator's state of mind, while the other characters, her friends David and Anna and her lover Joe, manifest the division and struggle between the dualities of instinct and reason, and body and mind. The struggle is engendered by a clash between the value of "others" as represented by the Americans, by the values of her friends, and her own instinctive values. For the narrator, this clash results in a dédoublement, or the splitting of the personality through conflicting and opposing forces, her consequent alienation from "her friends," and her turning away from the external world into isolation. Within her enforced isolation, the narrator undergoes successive changes and explores the duality of her own nature by searching for the truth underlying appearances. When the narrator comes face to face with the corpse of her father, at the bottom of the lake, the experience coincides with her growing sense of isolation. The dislocation the narrator feels on her journey home to northern Quebec reinforces her sense of alienation and isolation as she acknowledges, "nothing is the same, I don't know the way any more" (p. 12). The images of the physical landscape, the winding waterways, the sheer cliffs, the decayed logs and pine stubble, and the birches dying of cancer all evoke the narrator's state of mind. She feels as "out of place" in this "foreign territory" as, in fact, her city friends are out of place here. The narrator's alienation within herself and in relation to her friends is acknowledged in her remarks: "I no longer have a name. I tried for all those years to be civilized but I'm not and I'm through pretending" (p. 168); and "my friends' pasts are vague to me and to each other also, any one of us could have amnesia for years and the others wouldn't notice" (p. 30).

Atwood's characters are particularized only with respect to their representational function. David and Anna are clearly stereotypes: David is an instructor in communications but he is unable to communicate, he is "an imposter, a pastiche" who utters platitudes, clichés, and imitates cartoon figures in his speech; Anna, too, is a fake, a cosmetic doll, "a seamed and folded imitation of a magazine picture that is itself an imitation of a woman who is also an imitation" (p. 165). Even Joe, who is described by the narrator in terms of the clay pots which he makes, is "awkward and only partially formed." As well as their abstract function, however, the characters are grounded in the concrete and novelistic world of actions and events: Anna sunbathes, reads romances, and worries about her make-up; David and Joe shoot footage for their film, Random Samples; David tries to seduce the narrator because he thinks his wife has slept with Joe; and Joe, the most elusive of the characters, attempts to establish some kind of permanent relationship with the narrator. As for the narrator, she seems more a voice, flat, emotionless and detached. She observes herself clinically, she admits she no longer feels, nor even dreams. She explicitly acknowledges the distance between her head and her heart after her refusal to marry Joe:

> I didn't feel awful; I realized I didn't feel much of anything, I hadn't for a long time. Perhaps I'd been like that all my life, just as some babies are born deaf or without a sense of touch; but if that was true I wouldn't have noticed the absence. At some point my neck must have closed over, pond freezing or a wound, shutting me into my head; since then everything had been glancing off me, it was like being in a vase, or the village where I could see them but not hear them because I couldn't understand what was being said. (p. 105)

The narrator recognizes her problem as a division between the flesh and the spirit, and the consciousness and the unconscious. She admits, "the trouble is all in the knob at the top of our bodies. I'm not against the body or the head either: only the neck which creates the illusion that they are separate" (p. 76).

The narrator's sense of dislocation is literal and metaphorical. She has been cut off from her past by the deaths of her mother and now her father, and by the reconstruction of her own past out of "memories as fraudulent as passports," in order to protect herself and her parents from an action she cannot bear to remember. The island she is on suggests her isolation and the shift in the tense in the second part of the novel reinforces it. The shift from the first person present tense in the first part of the novel to the first person past in the second part is important in terms of the narrator's withdrawal from the events of the past, while it reinforces the importance of the past in relation to the events of the present.[28] It is only through an exploration of the past lies that the narrator will be able to confront herself and the truth of her life in the present. Yet, the narrator's perceptions are as unreliable as her false histories; they are the product of a solipsistic eye that sees everything as a threat to the self: when Anna and David tell the narrator of their discovery of her father's body, for instance, she immediately assumes, "they had planned on hurting her." There is a growing sense of confusion as fictional memories juxtapose with accurate memories as they gradually surface. Beginning with her recollection of the carsickness she used to feel as a child hurtling along the same roads with her family, she soon remembers more relevant memories from the past; she remembers specifically a dangerous canoe trip she had made and the near-drowning of her brother. Yet, these memories mix with the fraudulent ones: "My husband catches up with me again, making one of his brief appearances, framed memories he specializes in: crystal clear image enclosed by a blank wall" (p. 47).

As the narrative progresses and gathers momentum, the narrator's dislocation from the present and the external world increases and she moves deeper into her mind and past. After seeing the dead heron, memories of her participation in acts of cruelty, equally senseless, surface; she remembers how she and her brother used to throw the "bad" kind of leech into the fire. The recognition of her own guilt and complicity in evil acts forces the narrator to realize she can no longer make excuses about childhood when she acknowledges, "that was the wrong way, the entrance, redemption was elsewhere" (p. 132). The admission is the first step in the narrator's refusal to be a victim and recognition that she must accept her own actions as well as admit and accept their consequences. It is at this point that the novel subtly shifts from mimetic to metaphoric function.

The narrator's decision to confront her father's mystery as a clue to her own redemption leads her to decipher the unintelligible drawings and marks her father has made on a map. She thinks the marks will lead her to Indian drawings which will have some symbolic code for her:

> He had discovered new places, new oracles, they were things he was seeing the way I had seen, true vision; at the end, after the failure of logic. (p. 145)

She dives deep into the lake to look for the paintings and finds, instead, "a dark oval trailing limbs. It was blurred but it had eyes, they were open, it was something I knew about, a dead thing, it was dead" (p. 142). The image of the open eyes recalls the image of her brother's drowning, but, with a shock, she remembers, "it couldn't be him, he had not drowned after all, he was elsewhere . . . it wasn't even my brother I'd been remembering, that had been a disguise" (p. 143). The image shifts to that of her aborted foetus "drowned in air." With this revelation, the confusing stories of husband, child, and marriage are clarified: the childbirth was really an abortion; the wedding was the day of the abortion; and the husband was the lover who had arranged it all. She now realizes she had done the wrong thing, she had allowed herself to be manipulated, to be a victim. What she knows is that the foetus had been alive and needed her protection:

> He said I should do it, he made me do it; . . . He said it wasn't a person, only an animal; I should have seen that was no different, it was hiding in me as if in a burrow and instead of granting it sanctuary I let them catch it. I could have said no but I didn't; that made me one of them too, a killer. (pp. 144-45)

This admission clarifies why she has hidden herself in past memories "fraudulent as passports":

> It was all real enough, it was enough reality for ever. I couldn't accept it, that mutilation, ruin I'd made, I needed a different version. I pieced it together the best way I could . . . A faked album . . . . (pp. 143-44)

The anesthesia of false memory is not an escape for the narrator, but a "death" she has carried with her, "layering it over a cyst, a tumour, black pearl" (p. 145). The narrator interprets this knowledge as a revelation from the magic powers of the gods "here on the shore or in the water, unacknowledged, or forgotten" (p. 145).

The narrator's plunge into the lake is a literal and ritualistic plunge that reveals to her the way to reparation and redemption. It also marks the shift in the narrative from the literal and the mimetic to the poetic as the narrator's quest for insight is rendered through a process of decreation, and a disengagement from time, history, and even language. Having admitted the truth of her past, the narrator feels she has been given the power of knowledge and insight which enables her to see beyond appearances and surfaces. She now rejects the concept of killing as "sport" and rejects her ex-lover's distinctions between legitimate foetuses and illegitimate ones that must die. It enables her to "see" correctly as she does when she is confronted with David's sexual advances:

> The power flowed into my eyes, I could see into him, he was an imposter, a pastiche, layers of political handbills, pages from magazines, affiches, verbs and nouns glued on to him and shredding away, the original surface littered with fragments and tatters. (p. 152)

Still this power is not enough; she needs to know not only how to see, but also how to act, a gift, that she believes will come from her mother:

> More than ever I needed to find it, the thing she had hidden; the power from my father's intercession wasn't enough to protect me, it gave only knowledge and there were more gods

> than his, his were the gods of the head, antlers rooted in the brain. Not only how to see but how to act. (p. 153)

The narrator finds this "gift" in the scrapbooks her mother has kept of the drawings she had done as a child, particularly a picture of a "woman with a round moon stomach: the baby was sitting up inside her gazing out" (p. 158). The original meaning of the drawing is now lost to the narrator, but she understands "they were my guides, she had saved them for me, pictographs. I had to read their new meaning with the help of the power" (p. 158). In order to know how to act, the narrator realizes she will have to reach the "gods," or powers, but to do so she will have to prepare herself to meet them since "to see them in their true shape is fatal. While you are human but after the transformation they could be reached" (p. 158).

The narrator's transformation begins in the temporal world; she is able to see Joe for the first time, and she sees "for him truth might still be possible." She sees that what will preserve him is "the absence of words," unlike the others who are "already turning to metal, skins galvanizing, heads congealing to brass knobs" (p. 159). She realizes what she must do is "immerse" herself in "the other language" (p. 158). At this point, the narrator feels liberated from death as she admits, "nothing has died, everything is alive" (p. 159). This understanding is the beginning of what will become an almost mystical awareness of the unification of all matter, living and dead, and in this state of heightened awareness she attempts to conceive a child with Joe. As they make love she feels:

> . . . my lost child surfacing within me, forgiving me, rising from the lake where it had been prisoned for so long . . . the two halves clasp, interlocking like fingers, it buds, it sends out fronds. (p. 162)

With the hope of new life growing within her, the narrator now chooses what Carol Christ aptly calls "the isolation of the visionary quest."[29]

In order to immerse herself in "the other language," she must first purge herself of past and present reality in order to achieve the integration and wholeness that she seeks. To do this the narrator breaks all connections with the human world and enters the final state of awareness. Alone, in the bottom of the canoe, in the middle of the lake, she begins to experience metamorphosis:

> Through the trees the sun glances; the swamp around me smolders, energy of decay turning to growth, green fire. I remember the heron; by now it will be insects, frogs, fish, other herons. My body also changes, the creature in me, plant-animal, sends out filaments in me; I ferry it secure between death and life, I multiply. (p. 168)

Following this, the narrator ritualistically breaks connections with the human world by burning and breaking all the ~~mater~~ial objects around her; she then enters the final stage of her journey, transformation itself. The narrator realizes her transformation exists beyond any "rational points of view" as she embraces and descends to an elemental and primeval state, but she acknoweldges, "there are no longer any rational points of view" (p. 169). Having purified her life of material possessions, she now undergoes purification by immersing herself in the lake where her transformation begins:

> The earth rotates, holding my body down to it as it holds the moon; the sun pounds in the sky, red flames and rays pulsing from it, searing away the wrong form that encases me, dry rain soaking through me, warming the blood egg I carry. I dip my head beneath the water, washing my eyes.
>
> Inshore a loon; it lowers its head, then lifts it again and calls. It sees me but ignores me, accepts me as part of the land.
>
> When I am clean I come up out of the lake, leaving my false body, floated [sic] on the surface, a cloth decoy . . . . (pp. 177-78)

The narrator's literal purging in the lake symbolically destroys spatial and temporal boundaries as she experiences the mystical identification with all things, all forms of life as "a leopard frog with green spots and gold-rimmed eyes, ancestor. It includes me, it shines" (p. 179). Finally, the narrator incarnates the principle of transformative energy itself:

> Slowly I retrace the trail. Something has happened to my eyes, my feet are released, they alternate, several inches from the ground. I'm ice-clear, transparent, my bones and the child inside me showing through the green webs of my flesh, the ribs are shadows, the muscles jelly, the trees are like this too, they shimmer, their cores glow through the wood and bark. (p. 181)

The transformation is complete when she acknowledges, "I am still the thing in which the trees and animals move and grow" (p. 181). She now "sees" as she has a vision of her mother feeding birds and then she sees her father's image, or at least sees what he has become; she sees the image of the beast within him, the beast that he had tried to keep too long at bay through his belief in scientific inquiry. Finally, having seen the "god" and felt the powers, the narrator relinquishes her parents back to death by acknowledging they are not gods, but merely human; although they guide her, there is no salvation in either one: "They were gone finally, back into earth, the air, the water, wherever they were when I summoned them" (p. 188). Her parents have spoken to her "in the other language," and with this knowledge, it will be possible for the narrator to begin again.

The narrator's transcendence is a metaphoric one; it implies a transcendence of the limits of logic and language to the primitive source of being. Her quest for wholeness takes her beyond the roles dictated by society into a consciousness never guessed at by her companions; it would be inconceivable to them. Yet, it is through this transformation that she achieves the integration of body and mind into a coherent and whole being. As the narrator moves back to temporal reality, the gods are reduced back to abstractions, "theoretical as Jesus." As the narrator admits, "they've receded, back to the past, inside the skull" (p. 189). Although she realizes there is "no total salvation, resurrection," she brings with her "from the distant five nights ago, the time traveller, the primeval one who will have to learn" (p. 191). She also resolves "to refuse to be a victim," a resolution that indicates the narrator's decision not to allow the evils within society to ruin or corrupt her new integrity.

The narrator's final surfacing is from the depths of her being into a new life, to "re-enter" her own time, and to live one way or another in the world. Her decision to return to society is, in part, based on the necessity for action; she will take what she has learned "back to the city." It is also based on her hope for the unborn and desired child. When Joe returns for her, the last time, she is able to go with him, understanding "we can no longer live in spurious peace by avoiding each other, the way it was before, we will have to begin."[30]

In Surfacing, the split between the body and the mind within the narrator also manifests itself in the voice of the narrator and the novel's language. The precise, impersonal language of the narrator stands in contrast to the increasing emotion behind her experiences. The narrator's language also appropriately reflects her inability to feel and her cerebral approach to life. Both voice and language reveal the widening gulf between the inner psyche of the narrator and the external world, a separation that becomes more apparent in the ever increasing problem of communication within the novel. The problem of language and communication are closely related to the schism between mind and body: the narrator rejects language as "the voice of reason"; she sees it as the means to the separation of mind and body. She also finds it inadequate as a means of expressing emotions; it only codifies and limits feelings such as Joe's ubiquitous "I love you." Language per se sets individuals apart rather than brings them together; it also separates man from the animal kingdom and nature in general. The narrator believes she needs a language that will express the ineffable, a visionary language that will underline verbal language and express fundamental meaning. Atwood's narrator seeks a code that will enable her to move into a mystical and mythical participation with nature in order to confront her own self; in other words, the language she seeks is the language of the soul in communion with nature.

The language the narrator seeks is radically different from the social chatter of Anna, the clichés and media noise of David, and even the scientific language of her father and brother; these languages are emotionless and only superficially capable of rendering human exchange. Language, the narrator realizes, is a tool used by man to separate himself from the natural world and it results in an artificial polarization of man and nature. The language the narrator finds takes her to the primitive source of being where it is "the small waves talking against the shore, multilingual water" (p. 178). Only through the language of the soul in communion with nature can her parents speak to her and thus make it possible for her to begin again. The narrator's transformation is not only a disengagement from time and from history, it is also one from language; her re-entry into time is also an entry back into the world of language.[31] Her final acknowledgement that "for us it's necessary, the intercession of words" (p. 192) is an acknowledgement that language is what makes us human. It is an imperfect instrument, and because of this she feels "we will probably fail, sooner or later, more or less painfully" (p. 192). However, this does not stop her; she realizes Joe is still growing; as she says, "he is only half-formed and for this reason I can trust him" (p. 192). It is this belief that pushes the narrator to "tense forward, towards the demands and the questions" and as she moves forward towards Joe, she realizes "the lake is quiet, the trees surround me, asking and giving nothing" (p. 192).

In Surfacing, language is not only a major thematic concern as a means to perception and knowledge, it is also the means of the metaphoric journey into another state. In the language of the novel, the mimetic and the metaphoric coalesce in a structure of mythic patterns. As Sherrill Grace points out, Atwood's use of language in the novel is phenomenological; it presents objects in their utmost clarity so that the word becomes a metaphor of the object it designates. Language itself becomes a metaphor as the distance between the word and the object diminishes, thus bridging the distance between the subject and the object and bringing them together. In this way, language recovers its pristine origins; as the narrator says, it becomes "everything you do" (p. 129). Through her language, Atwood challenges ways of seeing: the narrator's own perceptions are engaged in a continual process of amplification and adjustment; as she seeks a new code of language, the language of the text changes: it becomes numinous, a means to the visionary quest.[32]

It is, then, through the specific function of language in

Surfacing that the narrator penetrates a preternatural and primeval reality in order to reintegrate body, mind, and nature. Grace notes that "imagery and symbols in the book, while diverse and rich, have a stunning clarity of function and focus."[33] In fact, image patterns become symbols: their metaphoric intention expresses the duality of the mind and the body already delineated in the symbolic function of her mother and her father: her father represents empiricism, or the reason and logic of the head, and her mother represents intuition and feeling associated with the heart. Similarly, where her father's gift becomes the truth about herself (through him she is able to see), her mother's gift is organic and it shows her how to act. To be complete herself, the narrator must establish both parents within the contexts of her life.

Atwood uses images and certain specific groups of images to support and further delineate the duality between the body and the mind and its reintegration. While these images operate in a realistic and specific context, they represent an ever increasing mythic pattern. Atwood uses particular images to convey the act of consciousness, or the phenomenological process itself. The recurrent images of the frog, for example, reflect the narrator's sense of dislocation as "Bottles distort the observer too: frogs in the jam jar stretched wide" (p. 106). The same image occurs in the narrator's prenatal memory of her brother's near drowning:

> It was before I was born but I can remember it as clearly as if I did see it: I believe that an unborn baby has its eyes open and can look out through the walls of the mother's stomach, like a frog in a jar. (p. 32)

The same graphic image of the "eyes" is used in relation to the body of her drowned father, "a dark oval trailing limbs. It was blurred but it had eyes, they were open" (p. 142); it also recalls something within the narrator that is deeply submerged, something "in a bottle curled up, staring out at me like a cat pickled; it had huge jellied eyes, and fins instead of hands, fish gills, I couldn't let it out, it had drowned in air" (p. 143).

The image of the foetus in the bottle represents the narrator's sense of guilt while the recurring image of drowning and the images of eyes collectively emphasize the unconscious and the narrator's inability to see. Atwood condenses and defines the separation between the flesh and the spirit and consciousness and unconsciousness in the image of the destroyed foetus which is the buried half of her spirit and unconsciousness. The frequent references to mutilation, death, disease, and amputation reflect the distortions of her fabricated past now seen as the consequences of an unwanted abortion. The narrator associates the abortion with her own death; "they had planted death in me like a seed" (p. 145). The image of the foetus in the bottle suggests not only her guilt at having destroyed the life within herself, but also the arrested state of her psyche.

The reality of the death of her father is the catalyst that forces the narrator's repressed guilt over her abortion to surface. At first, she thinks it is her drowned brother, until she admits, "it couldn't be him, he had not drowned after all, he was elsewhere . . . . it wasn't ever my brother I'd been remembering, that had been a disguise" (p. 143). By confronting the image of the foetus, "Suspended in the air, above me like a chalice, an evil grail" (p. 143), the narrator shatters the barriers she had erected between her conscious self and her other half, as she puts it, "sliced off from me." Images are more than representational signs of a purely objective or a purely subjective reality; they function primarily to draw both these realities into conjunction to communicate the immediate perception itself, as when the narrator's imagination collapses the image of her drowned father with the other death she has repressed, that of her dead child. In turn, the use of concrete images deepens and extends the drowning and surfacing metaphor to a poetic intensity and mythic significance. The plunge below the surface of the lake is more than a literal dive in search of rock drawings, it is a metaphoric descent into the unconscious. The narrator's search for her father translates to a more fundamental quest as she begins to strip away, first, the layers of her fabricated past, and then the layers of an imposed civilization.

The narrator's perceptions, even her most bizarre perceptions, evoked through particular images, always have a logical explanation. Nothing supernatural or preternatural occurs although she sees her dead parents as guides who offer her gifts. However, they are symbolic gifts: her father's gift is insight and the vision to see her quest, and her mother's gift is the visual and symbolic clue, the picture she had drawn as a child. The pictograph reflects the fact that the truth she seeks is already within herself; in order to become whole, the narrator needs to translate the pictograph by immersing herself in its metaphoric language. In this way, she transcends the ordinary limits of consciousness to engage herself in a mythic participation in nature, first, in her dive into the lake, and finally, through a complete metamorphosis into nature.

The descent into the water leads the narrator to her father's corpse and hence to her own vision, after "the failure of logic." The dive is one through space and time where the image of her dead father and that of her dead child connect to her own life and provide her with the ability to see the "truth" and the split it has caused within herself. Water is established as a means to redemption early in the narrative; it is a purifying agent through which the narrator is transformed "as part of the land" (p. 178). It is also the medium in which her newly conceived child undergoes "its watery changes." As a metaphor, water is the means to redemption and the medium of metamorphosis, but, in the final context, "it is quiet, like the trees, asking and giving nothing."

The narrator's final transformation occurs after the pictograph suggests to her a way of mending the break in her psyche. She does this first by impregnating herself as a way of exorcising the guilt of the past and as a way of connecting the past to the present and the future. She then communicates with the powers who can be reached only "through the other language" after the transformation. The transformation occurs when she can no longer speak, when she has become "the thing in which the animals move and grow" (p. 181). In this way, the narrator moves past language into nature where there are no barriers:

> The forest leaps upward, enormous, the way it was before they cut it, columns of sunlight frozen; the boulders float, melt, everything is made of water, even the rocks. In one of the languages there are no nouns, only verbs held for a longer moment.
>
> The animals have no need for speech, why talk when you are a word. (p. 181)

The narrator obliterates the distance between herself and the external reality and transcends the limitations imposed on her. Images embody metamorphosis or transformation itself, as the trees become designs that "leap up enormous," an owl becomes the direct rendering of emotion in "its voice feathered and clawed," and fish become ideas as "an idea of a fish jumps" (p. 187).

Atwood captures external processes through kinetic images which provide the precise rendering of momentary experience. As the narrator moves within herself and past language, the rendering of an external reality is distorted and the image becomes exact. The narrator acknowledges, "my body also changes, the creature in me plant-animal, sends out filaments in me" (p. 187). She becomes the equivalent of her interior condition: "I lean against a tree. I am a tree leaning" (p. 181); subject and object merge and become identical.[34] In this state, the narrator encounters the powers in the form of her mother and what her father has become and she communicates with them: "I saw them and they spoke to me, in the other language" (p. 188). The narrator's return to consciousness is marked by her relinquishment of her parents to death and a further understanding on her part, of the nature of her own life:

> No gods to help me now, they're questionable once more, theoretical as Jesus. They've receded, back to the past, inside the skull, is it the same place. They'll never appear to me again, I can't afford it; from now on I'll have to live in the usual way, defining them by their absence; and love by its failures, power by its loss, its renunciation. I regret them; but they give only one kind of truth, one hand.
>
> No total salvation, resurrection, Our father, Our mother, I pray, Reach down for me, but it won't work: they dwindle, grow, become what they were, human. Something I never gave them credit for; but their totalitarian innocence was my own. (pp. 189-90)

The scene of transformation in Surfacing is metaphorical in its assumption and in its language. The repetition of images of bottled, trapped, or murdered animals builds to the key scene in which the narrator encounters her father's corpse and confronts the fact of her abortion. The narrator's awareness and her growing panic are revealed through the increasing use of violent images. The confusion and complexity of her perceptions of reality are epitomized in the complex image of the plane, heron, and Christ:

> Overhead a plane, so far up I could hardly hear it, threading the cities together with its trail of smoke; an x in the sky, unsacred crucifix. The shape of the heron flying above us the first evening we fished, legs and neck stretched, wings outspread, a bluegrey cross, and the other heron or was it the same one, hanging wrecked from the tree. Whether it died willingly, consented, whether Christ died willingly, anything that suffers and dies instead of us is Christ . . . . (p. 140)

The narrator's awareness grows through a process of association as she penetrates more deeply into her own consciousness, while consequently the language and style of the narrative becomes more fragmented through the use of run-on and elliptical sentences. The plain prose and colloquial style work in conjunction with and give way to a numinous language that like poetry is imagistic, associative, and metaphoric. The transformation itself is created and marked by the use of image as metaphor as the rhythms of discursive language and the cadence of speech are transformed into poetic language.[35]

The shift from a narrative mode to a poetic one marks the shift in the narrator's perceptions from the concrete world of the plane and the heron past the abstract world of Christ beyond language itself into a state she knows would appear to be madness to the world:

> This was the stereotype, straws in the hair, talking nonsense or not talking at all. To have someone to speak to and words that can be understood: their definition of sanity. (p. 190)

Like the journey, the narrator's madness is symbolic of the private and collective heart of darkness; it renders a personal and archetypal journey into the self.

IV

In effect, the three major movements within the novel correspond to the metaphoric pattern of the mythic structure of separation, isolation, and return.[36] Each stage of the journey furthers the metaphoric journey to psychic and spiritual rebirth. In Part One, the narrator is separated from her own past through the death of her parents and by her own decision not to see them. She also separates herself from the events of the past as she reconstructs them from memories as "fraudulent as passports." The detachment of the first person voice of the narrator reinforces the sense of disassociation she feels from her own personal history, both past and present. Similarly, the strangeness of the terrain through which she moves "past the lake where the white birches are dying" emphasizes and corroborates the narrator's internal state. Memories of the past tentatively surface and mingle with the present as she remembers: driving over the same road and being carsick; a dangerous canoe trip she had once made; and her brother's near drowning. Part One significantly ends with the narrator pushing herself "reluctantly into the lake" as she recalls a childhood memory of when she would "dive and coast along the lake floor" (p. 75), an image that begins the metaphoric descent into the self where she will discover the split within herself.

Part Two presents the initiation into the self. Before the dive, the narrator admits she has anesthetized herself to feeling, "it was like diving, sinking from one layer of darkness to a deeper, deepest; when I rose up through the anesthetic, pale green and then daylight, I could remember nothing" (p. 111). The implication of the descent connects the split within herself to the abortion. During her dive and in the discovery of her father's corpse, she discovers her own spiritual death as a result of her complicity in the death of her child. The metaphoric implications suggest her drowned father as her drowned past; once she realizes this, she begins to feel and acknowledges, "feeling was beginning to seep into me, I tingled like a foot that's been asleep" (p. 146). Now, in hope of reparation, the narrator finds in the pictographs left by her mother a way of mending the break within herself. The second part of the novel ends with the suggestion of rebirth as "everything is waiting to become alive" (p. 159).

Part Three marks the narrator's return to community following a series of transformative acts. In this section, she completes the journey to psychic and spiritual rebirth. She attempts to replace "the seed of death" within her by initiating intercourse with Joe. The action is symbolic as well as physical, she wants only to be impregnated as "pleasure is redundant, the animals don't have any pleasure" (p. 161). Before, she had rejected Joe's physical advances in fear of pregnancy, now she wishes to begin a new life in exchange for the one she had sacrificed in "my lost child surfacing within me, forgiving me, rising from the lake where it has been prisoned . . ." (p. 161). The final stage of this journey is the metaphoric enactment of her own rebirth as she moves beyond rational and conscious life to symbolic communion with her parents and with nature.

In order to do this, the narrator rejects and ritualistically purifies everything around her associated with civilization. She destroys the film reels of Random Samples and when the others have gone she returns to the garden where she cries for the first time, a physical and symbolic act of release. She purifies herself by burning the material objects of her past life and by immersing herself, once more, in the lake. Once purified and in a state of heightened awareness, the narrator finds taboos and directives everywhere around her: each object of the external world takes on a sacred and personal significance. She forbids herself everything connected with human civilization including food and shelter. In such a way, the narrator reduces herself to a state that is metaphorically prehuman and recovers "the other language" necessary to communicate with the powers. She is justly rewarded by momentary visions of each of her parents who provide the force to restore the two halves of her psyche. Her acceptance of their death and her release of them through death back to nature marks the narrator's realization that for her there is no salvation through her parents; it also marks the beginning of her own resurrection and the consequent move back to community.[37]

In the transformation scene, the narrator in Surfacing metaphorically and symbolically returns to a primeval time before the knowledge of good and evil, to a time when man was undifferentiated and unconscious of his separate and divided self. In a sense, the narrator incorporates within herself the redemptive values of the nature deities embodied in her parents' spirits. In her transformation, the narrator reaffirms the sacred ties between man and nature. As well, she relives and exorcises her guilt-ridden past and, in acknowledging the generative and maternal qualities of her mother and the masculine principle of knowledge and wisdom in her father, and by taking from each of them these qualities, the narrator reestablishes her own potentiality for wholeness by joining the severed halves of her being. What she recovers is the metaphoric significance of her parents and as they recede she reenters her own time and acknowledges they were mortal and unable to give her either salvation or redemption. However, she has recovered knowledge of the human condition and the capacity for trust and love which enables her to surface to the present time and choose to return to Joe, who contains within him a kind of animal purity which she can trust. Moreover, she carries within her a hope for the future:

> Word furrows potential already in its proto-brain, untravelled paths. No god and perhaps not real, even that is uncertain; I can't know yet, it's too early. But I assume it: if I die it dies, if I starve it starves with me. It might be the first one, the first true human; it must be born, allowed. (p. 191)

The narrator's surfacing is a tentative triumph; she admits, "we will probably fail, sooner or later, more or less painfully" (p. 192), yet as Jerome Rosenberg says, "What else could it be?":

> To come to the devastating realization of one's sins, finally to feel emotion . . . to lose one's innocence and become part of corrupt humanity . . . must, of necessity, make one hesitate. It is this hesitation, this "tensing forward" that concludes the novel on its appropriate aesthetic, poetic, dramatic note.[38]

V

Surfacing not only reenacts an archetypal motif, it also reveals how the metaphoric process of myth becomes a critical tool towards self-awareness. Atwood's use of this motif as a structuring device is important not only because it lends depth and complexity to the narrative structure of the novel, or endows the narrator with deeper perceptions of her journey towards self-awareness, but because it finally functions to create universality of a particular self as it moves towards consciousness and understanding. As in the earlier work, The Journals of Susanna Moodie, there is a shift from a real, perceivable, and concrete world to a mythic one. And, as in the case of Susanna Moodie, the narrator's journey into the wilderness forces her to confront her own darkness and self. Also, as in The Journals of Susanna Moodie, Atwood illustrates classical myth, but roots it in a concrete and particular Canadian context as she simultaneously presents a poetic and a dramatic exploration of the disintegration and reintegration of a psyche divided and in conflict.

Stylistically and structurally, Surfacing is spare, symbolic and moves toward myth; yet it is a fictional prose narrative which embodies and responds to the conventions and expectations of the novel. It embodies, too, a private truth: like Watson's The Double Hook, it moves significantly from private vision towards ethics and social criticism of community and culture. Yet, like Smart's By Grand Central Station, the fusion of a personal vision and a moral dilemma is grounded in a cultural perspective and particularized in the unnamed character of the narrator. It fuses an objective reality with subjective sensation: the apocalyptic vision of By Grand Central Station which culminates in "there is no reality but love" is equivalent to the narrator's transcendent state of "I am a tree leaning." However, in Smart's novel, a highly poetic language merges and juxtaposes an external reality with an inner vision, whereas in Surfacing the merging of an external reality with an inner one is accomplished by a shift from dramatic function and discursive language to poetic image and metaphor functioning as myth. Like By Grand Central Station, Surfacing maintains the external form and plot of narrative fiction, but converts them to poetic image and metaphor; as in Smart's novel, also, there exists a close connection between the language of the novel and the personal experience it expresses. In the first person narrator, who views the external world by personal perceptions revealed in particular images, to the merging of two levels of experience, the concrete and the abstract, Surfacing moves to an archetypal and mythic structure in which revelation and not plot creates the narrative patterning within the novel. Transformation functions thematically and structurally. Whereas a mythical and contemporary world are juxtaposed and in conflict in By Grand Central Station, in Surfacing they merge and become one so that consciousness is united with unconsciousness and subjective reality with external phenomenon, thus portraying the universal in the particular.

Atwood's Surfacing, like LePan's The Deserter, exists in the modernist tradition of the novel. They exist, further, in a specifically Canadian context, in their concerns with the struggle between consciousness and instinct. In The Deserter, this dichotomy is thematically expressed in the schism or split in the consciousness of Rusty, the novel's central protagonist. Atwood's first person narrator also searches to unify the warring factions of instinct and consciousness. Both characters search for wholeness and identity in the face of fragmentation and isolation, and both characters descend literally and metaphorically in search of personal wholeness. In both novels as well, there is a tension between the world perceived subjectively and the world perceived objectively through facts. The dichotomy is expressed through the subjective perceptions of the central characters as they find themselves dealing with an external and objective world of facts. In both novels, image motifs provide the primary means of rendering perception and the changing state of internal consciousness. In The Deserter, however, these images remain unrelated and fail to coalesce with or accommodate a conventional narrative structure. Although there is an attempt to develop a unifying mythic structure, it seems imposed and partially developed. In essence, in The Deserter, a poetic mode works in opposition to a narrative framework. In Surfacing, however, the narrative develops through a system of images aligned to a central and controlling metaphor which connects the concrete and the particular (or the literal) with a universal and mythic structure. The metaphoric implications of "surfacing" become evident as poetic image and metaphor convert the literal journey into an archetypal quest. The thematic metaphor of drowning and surfacing is literally enacted as it structurally provides the narrative with a controlling mythic framework to create a poetic enlargement to Atwood's vision. Atwood accomplishes this by manipulating the language of the novel from dramatic and discursive function to a poetic and emblematic one. Thus, the narrator's quest results in a metaphoric union of the external world and the perceiving consciousness. As in Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, Atwood integrates narrative and poetic conventions; it is not plot but metaphoric transformation and revelation that create the structural patterns within the novel as an inner vision is revealed through metaphor and myth in a form that refashions the novel to the function of a poem.

CHAPTER FIVE

MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S THE COLLECTED WORKS OF BILLY THE KID AND COMING THROUGH SLAUGHTER: POETIC PROCESS AS NARRATIVE MODE

> "I believe that a work of art attempts to capture the universe . . . to be a microcosm or model. What the work of art conveys then is its own structure, its own design, which is an attempt to capture the design or larger rhythm of the universe as it "unfolds" in human consciousness. This is the meaning of artistic form now and in the past."
>
> Tom Marshall, Harsh and Lovely Land

I

While the novels By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, The Double Hook, The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, and Surfacing sustain a narrative structure, their real virtue rests in their use of language and form. In each of these novels, in some manner, and with different degrees of success, the poet-novelist abandons or shatters the narrative line based on contingency and temporality, and with it the organization provided by conventional chronology as the essential structural principle of the novel. In their novels The Double Hook, The Second Scroll, and Beautiful Losers, Watson, Klein, and Cohen create new modes of narrative. Again, with different degrees of success, they convert the conventional tools of narrative to poetic function and create symbolic structures. In The Double Hook, the interplay and patterning of the concrete and elemental images of nature determine a symbolic pattern and the symbolic ramifications of the image motifs reinforce the novel's thematic and structural pattern of death and rebirth. In Klein's The Second Scroll, however, a symbolic pattern is superimposed upon a conventional framework of a temporal and linear ordering of events. Cohen, on the other hand, successfully integrates dramatic representation and symbolic motif as he converts the conventions of the novel to symbolic function and form. Cohen's characters and the events in the novel exist within a narrative structure and a dramatic framework, yet they also function as symbolic figures whose various pairings and juxtapositionings produce successive and deepening levels of meaning within the novel.

In Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, LePan's The Deserter, and Atwood's Surfacing, there is a similar concern with visionary experience as the subjective and experiencing consciousness stand in opposition to an external world of events. In By Grand Central Station, a metaleptic frame of allusions and image motifs creates narrative progression and characterization as the emblematic language creates an archetypal vision of love and despair. In LePan's The Deserter, however, there is a discordant degree of novelistic linearity and plot as the narrative structure fails to integrate with a transcendent vision; in effect, a transcendent vision created through image motifs is partially imposed on a narrative sequence of events. Atwood, on the other hand, successfully integrates an objective reality of external events and the subjective consciousness of the narrator. In Surfacing, the function of poetic image and metaphor translates a literal and dramatic journey into a metaphoric and symbolic quest resulting in a poetic text.

Michael Ondaatje's Coming Through Slaughter further challenges the notion of plot as concerned with cause and effect relationships, as he moves beyond the experiments of Watson and Cohen. He exploits syntax, image, and metaphor for the creation of characterization and narrative progression; furthermore, he creates a self-reflexive structure where subject, medium and the poet himself interact to express the duality of instinct and consciousness. Whereas Cohen exploits--and even parodies--the traditional conventions of the novel in Beautiful Losers, Ondaatje goes further; he fragments the linear structure of narrative by the enjambment of time, space, and voice. He does this because he wants to depict not just the fragmentation of individual personality, but in particular the public and private aspects of a personality. Thus, Ondaatje dispenses with chronology as a structural device in order to establish continuity by other means. While in conventional terms his narrative line seems tenuous, he nonetheless creates a unified structure by means of patterning and in the use of image motifs. But his use of image varies from Watson, Cohen, and Atwood. In their works, image shifts into metaphoric or symbolic meaning; in his, image functions to re-enact event. Ondaatje creates narrative progression through the shifting and contradictory meaning of the images. They function to create a literal and metaphoric reenactment of the imagination caught between contradictory forces. In the process, the function of the image constitutes both the subject and the form of the novel expanding to include both Buddy Bolden, the central figure of the novel, and the author himself as its subject.

In Coming Through Slaughter, form, style, and language create an unmediated confrontation of event while it is occurring, turning it directly into myth. Where both LePan and Atwood structure their narrative by the reenactment of an archetypal motif, using it as a critical tool for self-examination in their central protagonists, Ondaatje, like Cohen, creates personal myths from material generally not associated with traditional myths. Yet, unlike Cohen, Ondaatje turns to specific historical or legendary characters such as Billy the Kid and the legendary cornet player, Buddy Bolden, for his material and turns their stories into personal myths with universal significance. In this way, his use of myth is also different from that of LePan's and Atwood's. In The Deserter and Surfacing, myth works thematically and structurally as a motif to create the universality of a particular self as the self moves towards consciousness and understanding. In Ondaatje's work, image constitutes the reenactment of an original event that becomes imbued with universal significance. In his first major work, The Collected Works of Billy the Kid (1970), Ondaatje finds a vehicle and a form to express his complex personal vision dramatically and poetically. The structural patterns around which Ondaatje creates his story in The Collected Works and Coming Through Slaughter are innovative and in accordance with the reality he wishes to express; in both works, he creates a discontinuous form (a "narrative collage") structured by a poetic mode and form.[1]

II

The lyrics in Ondaatje's Rat Jelly: Poems 1967-1973, particularly the poems "King Kong Meets Wallace Stevens," "Spider Blues," and "White Dwarfs," suggest a concern with the problematic relationship between the order or form of artistic expression and the anarchy of experience. The movement from these poems to Coming Through Slaughter is to a more dramatic exploration of the difficulty in creating a form supple enough to express this. The poem "White Dwarfs," for example, prefigures the characters of Billy the Kid in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid and Buddy Bolden in Coming Through Slaughter as "those who shave their morals so raw/ they can tear themselves through the eye of the needle."[2] The later works dramatize this image as the poet/author struggles to contain and control the experience as he expresses it.

Ondaatje's early extended sequence, the man with seven toes (1969), moves beyond the lyric toward the longer experimental form that will become solidified in The Collected Works and Coming Through Slaughter. It is an important transitional work that reflects both an interest in and a move toward narrative. For Ondaatje, the story of the English woman who, after the shipwreck of her boat off the Queensland Coast of Australia, spends a period of time living with the Aborigines, becomes a mythic exploration of a white woman's experience in the primitive and anarchic wilderness. As in Atwood's Journals of Susanna Moodie, short, imagistic poems reveal the woman's confrontation with strange new experiences in the wilderness. Like Atwood, Ondaatje focusses his attention on the effects of an alien and hostile landscape and life upon the woman. Whereas Atwood transforms this particular Canadian woman's experiences into myth, Ondaatje universalizes the English woman's experiences as he recreates it by moving the story from the Australian context to an unspecified place and time and by developing the character of the woman as a universal figure. In both poems, however, the journey away from civilization to the wilderness is psychological as well as physical; landscape functions as a correlative to the inner state of mind. Both poems are also composed of sections related internally through the various juxtapositionings and the repetitions of recurring images which give the sketch rather than the details of the narrative line.

In the man with seven toes, each section in the sequence presents a new and further experience of the woman. The voice in the lyrics shifts from the third person objective point of view, as in the first verse, where "the train hummed like a low bird/ over the rails, through/ desert and pale scrub,/ air spun in the carriages" to the first person point of view of the woman:

> tongued me
> felt cold metal, put
> hot fingers in my mouth, pulled
> silver fillings out,
> threaded, wore them like a charm[3]

The reader directly experiences the horrors of the woman's journey. The sense of dislocation is further emphasized when the voice later changes to that of Potter, the convict who rescues her but, as the natives have done, rapes her. In the scene with Potter, there is a recapitulation of the first rape: the natives have "cocks like birds" while Potter's cock is described "like an ostrich." The effect of the poem is one of physical and psychological violation and the events of each new section provide a successive series of shocking scenes. Yet the form of each section is complete within itself and stands by itself, although in effect there is no temporal, spatial, or syntactical continuity between the different sections.

In effect narrative continuity in the man with seven toes is created through the recapitulation of images and allusions; each image echoes an image or a situation that has occurred earlier. The final poem shows the woman, now out of the wilderness and in a hotel, yet the experience of the wilderness has so marked her that she now carries it with her: "In the morning she found pieces of a bird/ chopped and scattered by the fan/ blood sprayed unto the mosquito net."[4] Each of the images alludes to a past experience in the wilderness; in this way, Ondaatje creates in the sequence what Sam Solecki calls "a common ground or structure--even the possibility of an unsuspected metaphysical order--underlying the separate lyrics." Solecki qualifies this statement:

> But the structure remains deliberately indefinite and avoids becoming a constricting grid, just as the repeated images themselves stop short of falling into a symbolic mode of meaning.[5]

The final section in the sequence is a ballad which summarizes the tensions and dualities within the work. As in Ondaatje's later works, there is no real resolution to the dualities, and as Sam Solecki points out, it is important because "this deliberate irresolution leaves the sequence with a sense of open-endedness reinforced by the grammar of the last sentence. The subjunctive mood established in "God keep you" points to the future."[6]

the man with seven toes reflects both an interest in and a move toward narrative, as well as the beginning of specific techniques that will be developed and refined in The Collected Works and Coming Through Slaughter. It anticipates Ondaatje's use of semi-legendary characters to provide him with the material that is half fiction and half fact, and part history and part legend; it also anticipates the self-reflexive impulse and the open-ended and discontinuous form of the later works where, as Solecki says, the reader becomes a figure in the ground of the story:

> One aspect of the book's form--its various discontinuities--compelled the reader to enter the narrative as a figure in the story's ground, as a kind of character surrogate; another aspect, the lack of closure or resolution, reverses the spatial and temporal situation by having the book extend itself into the reader's world.[7]

Although Ondaatje calls The Collected Works a poem and Coming Through Slaughter a novel, the techniques and the methods he uses in each work are similar ones.[8] The distinction between poetry and prose blurs in his attempt to create a new mode supple enough to reenact the dualities and tension contained within a life.[9] To depict the public and private life as different aspects of the same personality in The Collected Works and Coming Through Slaughter, Ondaatje selects and reorders material in both cases, and as in the man with seven toes, he fuses it with fictional material.[10] In these works, Ondaatje's concerns are with the same mental geography that he depicts in his poem "White Dwarfs": both Billy the Kid and Buddy Bolden are social outcasts; they exist on the periphery, outside the accepted moral and social boundaries of society. Billy is the outlaw hero consumed by violence, while Bolden is the alienated and isolated artist unable to live within the structures of order and control. To delineate the fragmentation and the chaos which destroy both Billy and Buddy, Ondaatje fragments time and structure. He selects, reworks, and changes "facts," while juxtaposing inner voice with external points of view, including those of Ondaatje, himself. In both works, fragmentation is a motif that juxtaposes and merges legend, fact, fiction, and voice.

Essentially, The Collected Works of Billy the Kid and Coming Through Slaughter compel their own form through the particular use of language, style, and structure. In both works, Ondaatje, like the poet-novelists Klein, Cohen, LePan, and Atwood, attempts to express a personal and poetic vision within the context of a narrative form, a form that works to correspond to and embody the meaning of that vision. The Collected Works is an extended narrative poem in which a narrative and a poetic mode support and amplify each other, and in which the language of the sections are themselves poetically organized. Coming Through Slaughter evolves from The Collected Works, but here prose is poetically ordered in such a way that the traditional devices of prose fiction are entirely eliminated and recast around the poetic image. Although Coming Through Slaughter contains a story line and a group of central characters, it is through the function of the poetic image that the real meaning of the narrative takes place.

In both The Collected Works of Billy the Kid and Coming Through Slaughter, Ondaatje is concerned with the difficulties of creating a multifarious personality. In both works, he uses a similar montage of techniques to express the dualities, the contradictions, and the tensions evident in both Billy the Kid and Buddy Bolden; these techniques work to dramatize while poeticizing the tension within each character as it translates into violence. In The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Ondaatje uses the image of a photograph to express the inadequacy of trying to capture an image of a subject that is constantly moving and changing. There is an explicit and ironical contrast between what is offered as a photograph of Billy and Huffman's explication of the photographic techniques behind the picture:

> I send you a picture of Billy made with the Perry shutter as quick as it can be worked . . . .
> . . . .
> I shall show you what can be done from the saddle without glass or tripod--please notice when you get the specimens that they were made with the lens wide open and many of the best exposed when my horse was in motion. (CTS, p. 5)

Ironically, the photograph that is offered is an empty frame, thus suggesting that photographs cannot capture the image of someone as dynamic as Billy the Kid. This is, in fact, Ondaatje's concern: how does the writer capture a personality as dynamic and contradictory as Billy's? Billy's own interest in photography underlines this dilemma since the problem he faces controlling his own energy is the same one Ondaatje faces in his attempts to shape and control an aesthetic image of Billy the Kid. Through various voices interspersed with interviews, documents, and a comic-book story of the kid, Ondaatje attempts to fix an image of Billy by creating a series of perspectives on him while exploring, in the process, the poet's craft that shapes them.

Coming Through Slaughter evolves thematically and structurally from The Collected Works; what is implied in The Collected Works is dramatized in Coming Through Slaughter. As in The Collected Works, Ondaatje utilizes various points of view on Bolden, along with documents, snatches of songs,and lyrics, in an attempt to enter the character of Bolden, as the poet says, "to think in your brain and body . . . you like a weather bird arcing around in the middle of your life to exact opposites, and burning your brains out" (CTS, p. 134). Ondaatje's form dramatizes the anarchy and the ambiguity of the artist's life; it recreates the mental and the physical geography of Bolden. In The Collected Works, there is an implicit identification between Billy the Kid, the artist turned legend, and Ondaatje, the kid turned poet. The empty frame of the photograph of Billy, at the beginning of the poem, becomes the image of the poet, as a kid in a cowboy suit playing out "the kid's" legend, at its conclusion. In Coming Through Slaughter, the identification between the character of Buddy Bolden and Ondaatje is explicit: the poet acknowledges, "when he went mad he was the same age I am now":

> The photograph moves and becomes a mirror. When I read he stood in front of mirrors and attacked himself, there was the shock of memory. For I had done that. (CTS, p. 133)

The distance between character and author collapses as Bolden becomes the mirror image of Ondaatje; Bolden is the artist through whom Ondaatje critically examines the complex nature of his own creativity and the relationship between creativity and self-destruction. In Bolden, Ondaatje finds a means of externalizing and dramatizing the image of "the fall into silence." The choice of the cornetist makes this image particularly forceful: Bolden's collapse is a literal one into silence because his cornet will never sound again. For Ondaatje, silence is figurative since to fall into silence is to choose the absence of words and language. For the writer, this is the negation of art, hence, life itself. The implication is the same one delineated in the poem "White Dwarfs": only in the silence of death does one find an irreducible self.

In The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Billy offers a metaphor for Ondaatje's method in the image of the maze:

> Not a story about me through their eyes then. Find the beginning, the slight silver key to unlock it, to dig it out. Here then is a maze to begin, be in.[11]

The maze is again suggested in the criss-cross journey Billy makes with Charlie Bowdre across the Canadian border:

> Ten miles north of it then miles south. Our horses stepped from country to country, across low rivers, through different colours of tree green. The two of us, our criss-cross like a whip in slow motion, the ridge of action rising and falling, getting narrower in radius till it ended and we drifted down to Mexico and old heat. That there is nothing of depth, of

> significant accuracy, of wealth in the image, I know. It is there for a beginning. (TCW, p. 20)

The image suggests Ondaatje's method in his attempt to penetrate the multifarious personality of Billy the Kid; it is also similar to the image of the wheel in Coming Through Slaughter, which points to the elusiveness of Buddy Bolden's character:

> Webb had spoken to Bellocq and discovered nothing. Had spoken to Nora, Crawley, to Cornish . . . . Their stories were like spokes on a rimless wheel ending in air. Buddy had lived a different life with every one of them.[12]

These images not only suggest the elusiveness of the individual characters; they also point to the way of approaching and entering this elusiveness in order to understand it.

To create character and a central narrative line, and to reveal the complexity of his central character in The Collected Works, Ondaatje reorders material from documents to reveal the public image of Billy while he creates a picture of the private person through poems, sketches, and the song in the poem with which Billy is credited. To integrate the public and the private aspects of the single personality, Ondaatje interrupts the chronology of the material from the documents with Billy's personal expressions of his social and domestic experiences. Ondaatje fragments structure and time as he selects, reworks, and changes facts in order to transcend the facts to legend. The narrative sections in The Collected Works deal with the central conflict between Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett, his one-time friend and now enemy, a conflict which culminates in a man-hunt for Billy and the deaths of Tom and Charlie and, finally, in the death of Billy himself. The so-called "left-handed" poems, on the other hand, focus on Billy's personal life, in particular, on his relationship with Miss Angela D. and the peace and companionship he finds at the Chisum Ranch. Here, specifically, Billy finds the isolation he needs, and a harmony with his friends, a harmony which contrasts with the tension and violence he experiences in his public life.

Coming Through Slaughter similarly contains a central narrative or story-line which centers on a group of characters related to or associated with the central character Buddy Bolden. Events are narrated in what appears to be a random or chaotic fashion from various points of view, interspersed with documents, snatches of songs, lyrics, dreams, and specific recurring images. The story-line is attached to the central characters and their relationships with Buddy Bolden, although the real meaning and the action of the narrative occurs at the level of the poetic image. The central conflict in The Collected Works between the private and the public person of Billy the Kid, and between Billy the Kid and Pat Garrett (in essence the conflict between instinct and consciousness), is reenacted in Coming Through Slaughter where the literal and the figurative function simultaneously.

In Coming Through Slaughter, the conflict between instinct and consciousness is dramatized on the literal level in the opposition between Buddy's two closest friends, Webb and Bellocq. Webb and Bellocq essentially represent the polarized points of disorder in Bolden's life and art: Webb seduces Bolden from the private life back to the public life, while Bellocq tempts him away from his audience into a private area of silence. The intrusion of these two characters into Buddy's life is suggested metaphorically in the image of Webb's magnets pulling in contradictory directions:

> And Webb who had ten of them hanging on strings from the ceiling would explain the precision of the forces in the air and hold a giant magnet in his hands towards them so they would go frantic and twist magically with their own power and twitch and thrust up and swirl as if being thrashed jerking. (CTS, p. 35)

The "precision of forces" which controls the magnets, but which also can disrupt their "fine and precise balance," characterizes Buddy's life before he leaves his wife, Nora, and his children to stay with his friends, the Brewitts:

> . . . his life at this time had a fine and precise balance to it, with a careful allotment of hours. A barber, publisher of The Cricket, a cornet player, good husband and father, and an infamous man about town. (CTS, p. 13)

Just as the Chisum farm offers Billy isolation and a private life, so too do the Brewitts allow Buddy to move back to the private self and silence. Buddy's life with his lover, Robin Brewitt, stands in contrast to his life with Nora as a public man, a husband, and a father.

The polarized points in The Collected Works are represented by the scenes at the Chisum ranch and those that deal with Pat Garrett. Garrett, who was once Buddy's friend and ultimately is his assassin, also significantly stands in opposition to Billy the Kid. Garrett is part of Billy's legend and by reinterpreting and reworking the role of Garrett in relation to Billy, Ondaatje creates a motif of betrayal between them. There is an explosive tension between Billy and Garrett as friends who become combatants in a duel to death. Billy admits in his journals, "I'm waiting/ smelling you across the room/ to kill you Garrett" (TCW, p. 53). Later in his journal he defines his position to Garrett in terms of the tension that exists between them:

> Am the dartboard
> for your midnight blood
> the bones' moment
> of perfect movement
> that waits to be thrown
> magnetic into combat (TCW, p. 85)

In turn, these scenes juxtapose with the reminders that once Garrett and Billy were friends; in fact, their characters are paradoxically antithetical, yet complementary.

Pat Garrett is a gunman turned sheriff; moreover, he is a man of the mind who has schooled himself to be a calculating "sane assassin," an "academic murderer" who has triumphed over the body by drinking his way through madness to clarity. His mind is calculating and clear, grown sharp in its power of abstraction. His morality is refined to the point where "he had decided what was right and forgot all morals" (TCW, p. 28). Garrett responds through the mind, yet his sanity seems mad: he embodies order and control, he "comes to chaos neutral," and reacts to death unemotionally. As the narrator says, "he had the ability to kill someone on the street walk back and finish a joke" (TCW, p. 28). But, as Billy perceives, Garrett fears most what the mind cannot control: he became "frightened of flowers because they grew so slowly that he couldn't tell what they planned to do" (TCW, p. 28).

Billy's life significantly contrasts with and complements Garrett's. Where Garrett is a man of the mind, Billy lives in the world of the body and is dominated by instinct. He is only at home in the natural elements and believes only in the clarity of the body: as he tells Angela D. when he takes a bullet from her wrist, "nothing confused in there/ look how clear" (TCW, p. 66). Where Garrett disciplines his body in order to control his mind, Billy uses his mind to train his body.

He tells Garrett, "he did finger exercises subconsciously, on the average 12 hours a day" (TCW, p. 43). Unlike Garrett, Billy is happiest when "bodies are mindless" and "morals are physical/ must be clear and open" (TCW, p. 11). At one point, alone in a barn where he is free of "human complication," Billy burns himself clear of a fever. The constant struggle within Billy, and the tension between the mind and the body, or instinct and consciousness, is expressed in his journal, "the left-handed poems," where introspection forces him to become increasingly mental and hence self-conscious; it is, he says, "for mapping my thinking." The assertion of the mind is everywhere evident in Billy as nightmares, fantasy, and madness--what he calls "that angry weather in the head"--increasingly intrude into his life as "those senses that/ that want to crash things with an ax" (TCW, p. 72). The body and the mind are antagonistic within Billy, yet he acknowledges they are inseparable with "the mind's invisible black-out the intricate never/ the body's waiting rut" (TCW, p. 72).

The increasing duality between the body and the mind (instinct and consciousness) produces a stress within Billy, a tension that disrupts his life as the "one altered move" that will make him "maniac" (TCW, p. 41). The duality between the body and the mind also manifests itself in the struggle between Garrett and Billy, and ironically it is Garrett, the embodiment of order and control, who will be this one altered move for Billy. The stress within Billy and between Garrett and Billy results in a violence that becomes a dynamic struggle between life and death for both of them. For Billy, the violence is paradoxically a sign of vitality, yet, finally, the cause of death. In his last thought before dying he acknowledges, "the pain at my arm I'm glad for/ keeping me alive at the bone" (TCW, p. 95).

The thematic duality of the struggle between body and mind or instinct and consciousness manifests itself structurally in the two strands of the poem. The "left-handed poems" provide an access to the private self, in contrast to the narrative sections which are concerned with the public struggle between Billy and Garrett. The prose sections present accounts of the action over which Billy has little control. There is a subtle relationship between the violence of the prose sections and that which is unleashed in the journals. The overt and explicit violence within the prose sections is echoed in Billy's "left-handed poems," yet, the energy of the violence and the tension is now controlled in the discipline of poetic form. The implicit madness, for example, evident in the prose sections that describe Billy's first night at the Chisum ranch is unleashed in Billy's journal in his poem:

> (To come) to where eyes will
> move in head like a rat
> mad since locked in a biscuit tin all day
> stampeding mad as a mad rats legs
> bang it went was hot
> under my eye
> was hot small bang did it
> almost a pop
> I didnt hear till I was red
> had a rat fyt in my head
> sad billys body glancing out
> body going as sweating white horses go
> reeling off me wet
> scuffing down my arms
> wet horse white
> screaming wet sweat round the house
> sad billys out
> floating barracuda in the brain (TCW, p. 38)

The content betrays the impending loss of control within Billy in the image of the "barracuda in the brain," but form contains and shapes the energy behind it. Although Billy's desire is to control the energy, his understanding of how that control can be lost and erupt into violence is later suggested in the powerful and central image of:

> The beautiful machines pivoting on themselves,
> sealing and fusing to others
> and men throwing levers like coins at them.
> And there is there the same stress as with stars,
> the one altered move that will make them maniac. (_TCW_, p. 41)

The image of these machines is of a perfectly controlled "body" always subject to another, more powerful force that will work in opposition to it and make it manic. In the prose sections of the poem, this opposition produces a tension that is dramatically enacted as it erupts into violence.

In Ondaatje's _Coming Through Slaughter_, there is a similar pull and tension within Buddy Bolden between a public and a private self and between instinct and consciousness that erupts into violence. The duality between the public and the private person is dramatized through the characters in the novel, and in the consistent and repetitive use of specific images that link the interior and private world of Bolden to the exterior and public world. The "fine and precise balance" between these forces and contained in Buddy is exemplified dramatically in the magnetic pull of the characters Bellocq and Webb upon Buddy. The intrusion of Bellocq and Webb into Bolden's life enacts dramatically the image of the magnets pulling in opposite directions. For Webb, Bolden does not exist as a private person with private needs, but only as a public person; it is Webb who seduces Buddy back to the public life of music, away from his life with Robin, with his insistent plea, "why don't you come back, what good are you here, you're doing nothing, you're wasting . . ." (_CTS_, p. 83). Webb's seduction is powerful and Buddy acknowledges:

> God he talked and sucked me through his brain so I was puppet and she was a landscape so alien and so newly foreign that I was ridiculous here. He could reach me this far away, could tilt me upside down till he was directing me like wayward traffic back home. (CTS, p. 86)

As Webb's name suggests, he tries to trap Buddy literally and metaphorically. He represents the ultimate pressure of the audience; since Webb cannot create his own music, he creates Bolden, who, in turn, must play to please his audience. Webb is a detective whose inquiry into Bolden's whereabouts is more than thematically important; it is a narrative device with structural significance since it brings all aspects of Bolden's life and career together:

> Webb circled, trying to understand not where Buddy was but what he was doing, quite capable of finding him but taking his time, taking almost two years, entering the character of Bolden through every voice he spoke to. (CTS, p. 63)

On the other hand, Bellocq has no interest in Buddy's music; only the private person exists for him as he tempts Buddy away from the world of his audience into a world of silence. Bellocq is an artist, too, a tortured and unstable being, an outsider to society who eventually commits suicide. He is a photographer who takes pictures of the New Orleans prostitutes and then later slashes their pictures. Bellocq's kind of creativity is significant since "the making and the destroying" come from "the same source, same lust, same surgery his brain was capable of" (CTS, p. 55). More important, Bellocq, who "lived at the edge," was "at ease there," whereas Buddy "moved on past him like a naive explorer looking for footholes" (CTS, p. 64). Buddy once tells Webb that Bellocq had tempted him on to silence: "he had tempted me out of the world of audiences where I had to catch everything thrown at me" (CTS, p. 91).

Through Bellocq's influence, Buddy becomes introspective; following his friendship with Bellocq, Buddy's thinking begins to resemble Bellocq's where "the mystic privacy . . . has no alphabet of noise or meaning to other people outside" (CTS, p. 64).

The connection between Buddy and Bellocq is a strange one since "Buddy was a social dog, talked always to three or four people at once, a racer," and since what was strong in Bellocq was "the slow convolution of the brain. He was self-sufficient, complete as a perpetual motion machine" (CTS, p. 56). For Buddy, introspection is antithetical to the kind of music he plays which demands that he respond instinctively and without self-consciousness. The intrusion of consciousness produces another kind of music and Buddy's music specifically depends on a technique that is independent of the brain; it depends on the same kind of movement necessary in killing a fly, "to move the hand without the brain telling it to move fast, interfering" (CTS, p. 31). In this respect, introspection becomes debilitating for Buddy and the constant references to the brain, as in "my brain has walked away and is watching me" (CTS, p. 100) or "my brain suicided" (CTS, p. 119) suggest a radical alteration in the character of Buddy. Where he had been unconsciously spontaneous before leaving his wife, Nora, after his friendship with Bellocq and his affair with Robin, Buddy returns home and to his music and self-consciously prods himself into playing an anarchic and elemental music until he literally breaks and blows himself into silence.

Whereas Webb and Bellocq clearly represent the polarized points of disorder in Buddy's performing or public life which he is unable to bring into harmony, the women in his life, Nora and Robin, also function to suggest the tensions within Buddy's personal life. Nora Bass, as her name suggests, is the fixed point in Buddy's life to which he returns (as he does to the bass line in his music). Nora and his children give his life "a fine and precise balance" with "a careful allotment of hours"; they impose on him the order which he lacks in his own personal life, and to which he clings. Yet, ironically, what he resents in Nora is this very order; he sees it as being antithetical to his own nature:

> He did nothing but leap into the mass of changes and explore them and all the tiny facets so that eventually he was almost completely governed by fears of certainty. He distrusted it in anyone but Nora for there it went to the spine, and yet he attacked it again and again in her, cruelly, hating it, the sure lanes of the probable. Breaking chairs and windows glass doors in fury at her certain answers. (*CTS*, pp. 15-16)

On the other hand, Robin provides Buddy with the retreat he needs from the demands of the public life, from the demands of his family, and from the demands of his audience. With her, he moves into a private life of silence and introspection. The silence he finds with Robin is represented in the image of the white room where, he says:

> . . . I am anonymous and alone in a white room with no history and no parading. So I can make something unknown in the shape of this room. Where I am King of Corners. And Robin who drained my body of its fame when I wanted to find that fear of certainties I had when I first began to play, back when I was unaware that reputation made the room narrower and narrower, till you were crawling on your own back, full of your own echoes, till you were drinking in only your own recycled air. (*CTS*, p. 86)

Yet, while Nora and Robin represent a retreat from the public life for Buddy, paradoxically, they are the center of his audience. Buddy uses his music to seduce Robin when "he uses his cornet as jewelry" and later at Pontchartrain when Crawley visits with "a girl fan," he wants "the horn in her skirt." The women exercise a force over Buddy until the final crisis when he passes beyond the shelters offered by either Nora or Robin.

In the final parade, he is provoked by a girl fan in the audience who is compositely identified as "Robin, Nora, Crawley's girl's tongue" (CTS, p. 130).

Bolden contains within himself the tensions and the pulls of Webb and Bellocq and Nora and Robin and these tensions are reflected in his music. Even without these external pulls, there is within Bolden the same destructive force that had existed in the men before him, those people who he calls his "fathers" and "teachers," who had "put their bodies over barbed wire. For me" (CTS, p. 95). Like Buddy's music, their music is jazz, a form that depends upon spontaneity and improvisation; for Buddy, it is a music dominated by a compulsion to find what is outside order. To play this kind of music, a music that never repeats itself, "every note new and raw and chance" demands that the artist not stand still in his playing: Buddy had to be the loudest, most innovative cornet player in New Orleans. He plays an ultimate music, one that always has to be unpredictable, one which demands that he stay ahead of himself, as well as the other musicians, in what he is playing, "the whole plot of song covered with scandal and incident and change" (CTS, p. 43). Thus, Buddy's aesthetic ideal, to remain open at every moment to change and improvisation, is ultimately a destructive one.

Ironically, Bolden defines his own music against "the clear forms of Robichaux's music," even though he "loathed everything he stood for" because, as Bolden says, "he dominated his audiences. He put his emotions into patterns which a listening crowd had to follow" (CTS, p. 93). Whereas Robichaux is able to "put his emotions into patterns," the patterns in Bolden's music are completely determined by his emotions. Yet, he admires Robichaux's music, as he says, "drawn to opposites, even in the music we play" (CTS, p. 96). As in his personal life, there is in Bolden's music an unstated search for form and order; it is the paradox of his life. As his friend Frank Lewis says, "We thought he was formless, but I think now he was tormented by order, what was outside it" (CTS, p. 37). Bolden, too, understands this attraction of opposites; he is fascinated by the precarious balance between control and loss of control which is at the root of the contradictory desires within him. On the one hand, he wants to play an ultimate and elemental music in which the self is totally obliterated, and on the other hand, he wants to find release from the anxiety-ridden compulsion to play.

The tension generated by the contradictory forces within Buddy, as within Billy the Kid, erupts into violence and manifests itself in his nightmares, "the dreams of his children dying," as well as in his brutal attack on Pickett, and in the last parade where he blows himself into silence. The final thought before he collapses, "what I wanted," sums up without contradiction the contradictory desires within Buddy Bolden: to play an ultimate music in which the self is annihilated and to find release from the compulsion to play. Just as death resolves for Billy the dualities of mind and body and chaos and harmony, so, too, are the contradictory desires for privacy and fame, certainty and uncertainty, order and anarchy resolved for Buddy in the silence of "Dementia Praecox. Paranoid Type" (CTS, p. 132). For Buddy, madness is the means to reconstituting the wholeness of the self. However, where Billy's death transcends itself into legend, there is no transcendent significance for Buddy in madness; it is simply the release from the compulsion to create a too demanding art.

The characters of Billy the Kid and Buddy Bolden and the difficulties they have in controlling their own lives metaphorically function to reveal Ondaatje's difficulties in finding a method and form to accommodate the randomness and chaos of their individual lives. In Coming Through Slaughter, Ondaatje dramatizes the poetic image of the fall into silence in the character of Buddy Bolden; it is only in the fall that Bolden gains control of the chaos in his life. In The Collected Works, the prose sections of the poem complement the poetic sections and provide access to the private self of Billy by revealing how Billy sees life and interprets it. The poetic sections show how the violence of Billy's public life affects him privately. The energy of the prose sections are generated into Billy's creation of the "left-handed poems." In these poems, Ondaatje admits to the difficulty of creating a still image of Billy, through Billy, who acknowledges the journals are the means of "mapping my thinking going its own way" (CTS, p. 72) and of "harnessing my face/ goes stumbling into dots" (CTS, p. 85).

Thus, there is a sense of control in the left-handed poems not found in the narrative sections. The implication of this is that art (found here in the form of poems) offers momentary control of the energy in Billy's life that is always threatening to erupt into violence. The expression of Billy's perceptions are characterized in the left-handed poems by sudden and violent changes in temperament and in their language reflecting the loss of control in his life. The latent violence within Billy is apparent in the scene with the rats who have gone mad from eating fermented grain. Alone, and in the barn with these insane and aggressive rats, Billy begins to shoot at them maniacally.

> Till my hand was black and the gun hot and no other animal of any kind remained in that room but for the boy in the blue shirt sitting there coughing at the dust, rubbing the sweat off his upper lip with his left forearm. (TCW, p. 18)

The image of the mad rats echoes in another context at the Chisum's ranch: the harmony of the ranch is threatened for Billy by the collection of disabled pets which makes him feel he is "standing on the edge of the dark" where "the night, the dark air, made it all mad" (TCW, p. 37). The connection between madness and animals is again repeated in the left-handed poems in a dream that Billy records where mad cats fight in his head and horses foam white with madness. The images suggest a pattern of exterior control juxtaposed with internal chaos, a pattern that is again exemplified in the story of Livingston. The story of this man who interbred mad dogs until they turned on him and ate him is told against the peace and harmony of the night at the Chisum ranch. The same pattern repeats itself in the account of Billy's death: the exterior view is of Billy watching Garrett's men dancing outside Maxwell's window saying, "we got we got him the little skunk buggar." The external action merges with Billy's internal pain and becomes "lovely perfect sunballs/ breaking at each other" which Billy sees as bullets across the bed. As Billy's mind dissolves into chaos, "oranges reeling across the room," he mentally replays the visual impression of his first morning in bed with Angela D. and realizes, "it is my brain coming out like red gas/ this breaking where red things wade" (TCW, p. 95).

The discrepancy between exterior and interior control and the impossibility of fixing an image of Billy is reinforced in the journals. Both Sally Chisum and Paulita Maxwell face the same difficulty; they feel Billy's blood-thirsty reputation does not fit his boyish appearance, nor the person they know. Billy's own self-portrait is blurred with contradictions and all he is able to do is catalogue the divergent aspects of his personality. The attempt to arrest motion in a photograph determines one of the primary techniques in the poem designed to catch and record the process of recollection. A photograph is a moment of life caught as memory; Billy reconstructs the past through memory and through visual compositions that are frozen on the page. He recollects single scenes reset in different narrative contexts: their modulations are defined by rhythm, imagery, and the structure of the scene on the page, while the characters tend to be isolated in rigid patterns of action.[13] Billy's perceptions are like those of the microscopic lens which penetrates below the surface of the skin, "magnifying the bones across a room/ shifting in a wrist" (CTS, p. 39). He sees objects decomposing, the body fragmenting, and finds that "in the end the only things that never changed, never became deformed were animals" (TCW, p. 10). Ironically though, violent insanity and maniac destruction occur repeatedly in the scenes with animals. The association between animals and violence occurs in the juxtapositioning of the scene where Billy shoots Sally's snake-bitten cat, Ferns, and the first flash forward to the final shooting of Billy. The final association of animals and violence occurs just before Billy's death when the narrator ironically notes that Garrett, too, likes animals, but only dead ones. The association implies the fine line between the natural power of generation and that of degeneration.

The disintegration of living things is somewhat similar to the metaphoric transformation of natural objects to mechanical ones, while mechanical objects, like guns, photographs, and even pencils, fragment and create single and isolated impressions out of the movement and fluidity of life. In turn, this dichotomy reinforces the duality between mind and body and between instinctive response and a conscious or mechanical one. Ironically, Billy identifies the body with mechanical actions and instinctive processes with machines; for example, he recollects and describes a sexual experience with Angela D. as "the tall gawky body spitting electric/ off the sheets to my arm" (TCW, p. 16). In contrast, and yet complementary to this pattern, is the animation of mechanical objects as when Billy recalls a train yard back east where he saw "the beautiful machines pivoting on themselves/ sealing and fusing to others" (TCW, p. 41). The description suggests that mechanization borders on madness, a view that is reinforced in the scene of the barn where Billy goes mad at the sight of the rats' drunken abandon. He is transformed into a maniac gun, an automatic machine where "the smoke sucked out of the window as it emerged from my fist" (TCW, p. 18). At the same time, the rhythms of the sequence connect Billy's maniac shooting with the rats' insanity.

By creating various perspectives on Billy, Ondaatje catches the elusive and contradictory nature of the Kid. But like the photograph at the beginning of the poem, life escapes outside the frame so that only fragments remain. The various accounts of Billy given by his friends and contemporaries reinforce the fragmentation of the accumulating perspectives. In the Five Cent Wide Awake Library, a final and ironic perspective ends Billy's life in legend, although absolute certainty of his death deteriorates to doubt in Garrett's final comment, "I'm sure it was the Kid . . . for I knew his voice and could not have been mistaken" (TCW, p. 103). Not even in the exclusive jail interview where "the Kid tells all" does a single picture of the Kid emerge, and a photograph of the Kid never does materialize, although on the last page a small-framed shot of a child dressed as a cowboy appears in a larger frame. The real Billy the Kid only exists in the imagination of others and in his legend. The image of the photograph and the purpose of photography, in general in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, is to capture an image of life in a specific context and time. In turn, this becomes a metaphor for the primary technique of the poem which is suggested in Huffman's inscription, where he says the photographs were made with "the lens wide open." In a sense, the poem presents a series of shots with the lenses all wide open to admit a multiplicity of impressions.

Similarly, in Coming Through Slaughter, the juxtapositionings of a multiplicity of viewpoints and stories of Buddy Bolden create the structure of the novel and express the anarchy and the ambiguity of the artist's life. Thus, the essence of Bolden's music, which is improvisation, is accordingly reflected in the novel's structure in the shifts and changes in voice; in the various points of view; in the seemingly random fashion in which events are narrated; and in the interspersion of documents, limericks, and bits of song. Ondaatje's art, like Bolden's music, is one of process. Yet, beneath the apparent diversity of the form, there is a unity of effect created through a pattern of images and metaphors that express the fragmentation of an artist who did "nothing but leap into a mass of changes."

The characters of Webb and Bellocq and Nora and Robin establish the thematic polarities in the novel by dramatically representing Bolden's inability to bring the antithetical aspects of his personality into harmony. Figuratively, the fragmentation within Bolden is suggested in the image of the fan circling above his head in the barber shop. The fan, like the image of the photograph in The Collected Works, functions within the novel as a central and controlling metaphor of a self divided against the self. The fan is both the fan inside Bolden's shaving parlour circling above his head, and the "girl-fan" in the audience who pulls him further and further into his music. There is also an implicit connection between the image of the fan and the character of Webb, who "circled" around Bolden. However, in the climax of the novel, it is Bolden's own brain that pushes him to the point of self-destruction, figuratively captured in the image:

> Bolden's hand going up into the air
> in agony.
> His brain driving it up into the
> path of the circling fan. (CTS, p. 136)

For Buddy, the action caught in this image "happens forever and ever in his memory." Ironically, it is in this gesture that Bolden achieves his desire to play an ultimate music in which the self is totally negated. The conflict in Bolden's life is dramatized literally and figuratively as subject and medium interact to express the duality of instinct and consciousness within the character of Buddy Bolden.

In The Collected Works, juxtapositioning is a primary technique used to create narrative progression and to reveal the intricate link between life and death and instinct and consciousness. There is a continual interweaving of the motif of life and death as scenes from Billy's life merge with flash-forwards to his loss of consciousness and death as Garrett's bullet hits him. Ondaatje manipulates time in a series of scenes that look forward to Billy waiting for Garrett in Maxwell's room. He does this by connecting the first death scene with the last one through the repetition of the barracuda in Billy's brain. In the earlier scene, "sad billy's out/ floating barracuda in the brain" becomes in the final scene, "Poor Young William's dead/ with blood planets in the head" (TCW, p. 104). Sequences are also interconnected by setting up a particular composition which is later reworked and expanded. The following scene, for example, establishes a specific visual composition:

> Down the street was a dog. Some mut spaniel, black and white. One dog, Garrett and two friends, stud looking, came down the street to the house, to me. (TCW, p. 46)

The object of this visual field, "one dog, Garrett and two friends," is repeated in a later sequence in a more explicit context:

> Up to the well rides Pat Garrett and deputies Poe and MacKinnon. Scuffling slow, smoking as they dismount gentle and leave their horses and walk to the large hut which is Maxwell's room. They pass the dog. (TCW, p. 92)

Similarly, in the sequences concerned with Charlie Bowdre's death, the same scene is manipulated and reshaped into new patterns. In the first sequence, Billy graphically recounts the moment Charlie is hit by the bullet, "tossed 3 feet by bang bullet's giggling." Later, in a second account, the same moment is expanded and shaped by more explicit details including those of time and place (p. 22). A third and final sequence picks up where this one leaves off, moving the action progressively forward as Wilson, Dave, and Billy are forced out by Garrett (p. 48). In this respect, images and the particular objects in a visual field function as points of reference to connect sequences and create narrative. In other cases, particular scenes are played back in new patterns as in the description of Billy putting his hand in Charlie's stomach:

> His stomach was warm
> remembered this when I put my hand into
> a pot of luke warm tea to wash it out
> dragging out the stomach to get the bullet
> he wanted to see when taking tea
> with Sallie Chisum in Paris Texas. (TCW, p. 27)

In the second stanza, the first six lines are repeated in reverse order.

Similarly, particular rhythms are reechoed in different contexts as when Billy introduces Miss Angela D. with the limerick:

> Miss Angela D has a mouth like a bee
> she eats and off all your honey
> her teeth leave a sting on your very best thing
> and its best when she gets the best money. (TCW, p. 64)

This breaks to the more serious broken rhyme:

> Miss Angela Dickenson
> blurred in the dark
> her teeth are a tunnel
> her eyes need a boat (TCW, p. 64)

Again, this is later reechoed:

> she swallows your breath
> like warm tar pour
> the man in the bright tin armour star
> blurred in the dark
> saying stop jeesus jesus jesus JESUS (TCW, p. 73)

In the final sequence, the repetition of the line "blurred in the dark" interconnects and juxtaposes a sexual encounter between Billy and Angela with the later encounter of Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid. The last line of this sequence could be either Angela D. or Billy speaking as Billy's life merges with his death and Angela's dark sexualtiy becomes the bright star of Garrett's badge waiting in the dark room to kill Billy. The juxtapositioning of life with death is a dominant structure in the poem; it is the progressive expansion of this motif that gives the sequences and patterns within the poem unity and coherence.

Whereas the literal and the figurative are juxtaposed in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, in Coming Through Slaughter, they merge at the level of the poetic image. The title of the book indicates this;

the literal "coming through Slaughter" refers to Bolden's passage through this town when he is carried from the Asylum back to New Orleans for burial. "Coming through slaughter" is also a metaphor for Bolden's life, representing the destruction of the self. In fact, the instability of Bolden's life is aptly caught in the image of the block of ice in the window of Joseph's Shaving Parlour which "changed shape all day before your eyes." Bolden's instability is thematically and structurally brought to a climax in "the Liberty-Iberville connect" as Bolden pushes himself further and further into "the loss of privacy in the playing."[14] During this performance, he allows himself to be taunted on by a young, dancing "girl-fan." The mounting tension between Bolden and the girl is reflected in the prose of the passage as run-on sentences break into fragments and then continue to the climactic point of Bolden's loss of control:

> All my body moves to my throat and I speed again and she speeds tired again, a river of sweat to her waist her head and hair back bending back to me, all the desire in me is cramp and hard, cocaine on my cock, eternal, for my heart is at my throat hitting slow pure notes into the shimmy dance of victory . . . feel the blood that is real move up bringing fresh energy in its suitcase, it comes up flooding past my heart in a mad parade, it is coming through my teeth, it is into the cornet, god can't stop god can't stop it can't stop the air the red force coming up can't remove it from my mouth, no intake gasp, so deep blooming it up god I can't choke it the music still pouring in a roughness I've never hit, watch it listen it listen it, can't see I CAN'T SEE. Air floating through the blood to the girl red hitting the blind spot I can feel others turning, the silence of the crowd, can't see (CTS, p. 131)

As Buddy blows himself into silence, his last thought, "what I wanted," is isolated and set apart at the bottom of the page. At the Liberty-Iberville connect, Bolden ironically liberates himself by blowing himself into madness and silence; at this moment the contradictions in Bolden's life are resolved.

The development of Ondaatje's work from the man with 7 toes to Coming Through Slaughter is in the complexity of the narrative line and in the form of the work. In the man with 7 toes, narrative progression develops through the function of the images as they recall, suggest, and allude to each other, thereby connecting the various sequences to each other within the larger context of the work. The duality between instinct and consciousness in the man with 7 toes is similarly developed in the function of the image in The Collected Works. In this work, fragments become increasingly interwoven and the imagery increasingly ambiguous as the narrative moves towards Billy's inevitable death. Life becomes suffused with death as the growing confusion in Billy's mind shows in the increasing fragmentation of the left-handed poems as abrupt and fragmented lines run together with little punctuation, and various lines are repeated (p. 46) or juggled (p. 27) or blended together (p. 73). Images of the natural elements of earth, air, water and sun are increasingly ambivalent as they express the growing violence in life. At one time these images work to suggest the natural life to which Billy most responds and at another time they suggest death. Water, for instance, is a life-giving force but it is also a destructive element. When Tom O'Folliard sees water after having been without it for four days while walking wounded in the desert, he has to be knocked out "as he had gone to throw himself in water which would have got rid of his thirst but killed him too" (TCW, p. 51). Similarly, the benefits of the sun translate into destruction in the powerful scene where Billy feels he is being raped by the sun: when Garrett brings Billy in, "the sun sat back and watched while the (brain) juice evaporated" (TCW, p. 76). These images suggest a paradoxical union of life in death. Similarly, flower imagery explicitly reveals a growing tension between a life and death force. The pungent odour of the flower's fertility smells of "things dying flamboyant" and as "thick sugar deaths"; it is "the liqueur perfume" which "Sweats like lilac urine smell." The suggestion of death is always present, or inherent in natural fecundity. It is explicit in the procreation of the mad dogs who eventually turn on themselves and it is implied in Billy's last moment of life when he confuses Angela's fingers with "the total bullet claws" entering his head. Even the act of love leaves "hands cracked in love juice/ fingers paralysed by arthritic" (TCW, p. 16).[15]

Similarly, the image of the eye, a central and predominating image in the poem, functions ambiguously: it is first of all man's vision that links him to an external world; but it is also the particular vision of an individual that sets him off as an individual. Billy is aware of this when he confesses:

> The others, I know, did not see the wounds appearing in the sky, in the air. Sometimes a normal forehead in front of me leaked brain gasses. Once a nose clogged right before me, a lock of skin formed over the nostrils, and the shocked face had to start breathing through mouth, but then the mustache bound itself in the lower teeth and he began to gasp loud the hah! hah! going strong--churned onto the floor, collapsed out, seeming in the end to be breathing out of his eye--tiny needle jets of air reaching into the throat. I told no one. (TCW, p. 10)

The image of the eye represents both the eye of the camera and the eyes of the commentators who speak about Billy's character. It also connects to Billy's vision of life which begins as a mechanism below the skin's surface, something he can visually penetrate, in the way that he can foresee the shattering of his skull. The image of eyes becomes the focus of Billy's fear, pain, and madness revealed in his nightmare:

(To come) to where eyes will
move in head like a rat
mad since locked in a biscuit tin all day
stampeding mad as a mad rats legs
bang it went was hot
under my eye (TCW, p. 38)

The images of eyes in The Collected Works reflect the progression in Billy's life to an ultimate vision of approaching death: he sees wounds as "crying or bleeding eyes" and he describes Charlie Bowdre's wounds as "the eyes [which] grew all over his body." Within the course of the poem, Billy's vision of death transforms from that of "the golden eye of the sun" to the "frozen bird's eye" of the moon while the twin half-blind owls at the Chisum farm change to the "fish stare" of Billy's corpse. Billy foresees his own death in his premonition of "the eyes bright scales/ bullet claws coming/ at me like woman's fingers" (TCW, p. 73). In Billy's world all aspects of life are tinged with violence and death as he acknowledges, "blood a necklace on me all my life." Repetitions with variations on the facts, the details, and the circumstances of Billy's death create an insistent focus on death while the patterns of imagery that establish the duality between life and death resolve their tension in a paradoxical union of the two. The tensions and conflicts generated by the contradictory forces in Billy's life now resolve themselves in the final and definitive image of death, "the mind's invisible blackout the intricate never/ the body's waiting rut" (TCW, p. 72). By blending and merging incident, sensation, and image, Ondaatje structures and unifies the narrative and the poetic sections of the poem to coalesce into the final vision of the legendary hero. The thematic duality is structurally reinforced in the use of the narrative and the poetic stand as a reflection of the public and the private person of

Billy the Kid. Thus, the pattern of the duality is structurally communicated by the form itself.

In Coming Through Slaughter, there is a further development in the narrative line; the dramatic and the figurative merge in the function of the poetic image, so that the patterning of the images simultaneously creates narrative and metaphorical significance. Images create the tension of the contradictory forces in Buddy's life as they erupt into violence because "the brain's hate is so much." Just as the instability of Buddy's life is expressed in the image of the block of ice that changes shape all day, the potential for violence within Buddy is reflected in the image of the window shattering in "the outline of a star."[16] The image suggests the dual aspects of beauty and violence within Buddy: the same image occurs again in a different form when he throws the pitcher of milk at Robin, which leaves him "empty of all tension." The image of the star and of the broken window are recurring images that work in relation to the image of the hands going through windows and suggest, again, the duality of Buddy's life and the paradox of his art.

The image of windows in Coming Through Slaughter is pervasive, suggesting various responses on Bolden's part. At one time it represents the kind of response he has to intense experiences. For instance, Buddy learns the profound experience of music from his forefathers who "put their bodies over barbed wire" (CTS, p. 55); when he wants Cornish to play he tells him, "come on, put your hands through the window" (CTS, p. 14). Later, when he talks of Bellocq to Webb, he appeals to him with:

> Come with me Webb I want to show you something, no come with me I want to show you something. You come too. Put your hand through this window. (CTS, p. 91)

Bolden does almost go literally through the window, or comes remarkably close to it one time with Nora:

> Once they were sitting at the kitchen table opposite each other. To his right and to her left was a window. Furious at something he drew his right hand across his body and lashed out. Half way there at full speed he realised it was a window he would be hitting and braked. For a fraction of a second his own palm touched the glass, beginning simultaneously to draw back. The window starred and crumbled slowly two floors down. His hand miraculously uncut. (CTS, p. 16)

Another time, when visiting Brock Mumford, Bolden enters and exits through a window, and later, when he plays the music that Dude Botley hears as a struggle "between the Good Lord and the devil," he climbs into the barber shop through the broken glass window. And again, after the fight with Pickett, they both go over the ice and through the window as Bolden sees "the rain like so many little windows going down around us" (CTS, p. 74). Figuratively, Bolden imagines putting his hand through the window as "suicide of the hands," an image which suggests his death since the inability to make music would be a kind of death for him. Finally, the image of windows is repeated in reference to Bellocq whose photographs were "like windows," in that what you could see in his pictures is "her mind jumping that far back to when she would dare to imagine a future" (CTS, p. 54).

Images of windows are related to images of rooms: Bellocq is associated with dark rooms, "the dark empty spaces," while Robin is identified with the anonymity of the white room to which he finally succumbs, in the insane asylum, where he is "King of Corners." "The dark empty spaces" that Bellocq offers Bolden are equivalent to "the slow convolution of that brain." Following Buddy's friendship with Bellocq, the image of the brain becomes increasingly associated with Bolden until the brain's convolution becomes synonymous with "the dream of the wheel over his hands" (CTS, p. 40). What Bellocq does is push "his imagination into Buddy's brain" and show him the possibility of silence. The repeated neurological images signal a radical alternation in Bolden's character in the direction of Bellocq and the introspection he represents. Because this kind of introspection is antithetical to the music Bolden plays, it becomes physically debilitating to him, apparent in his constant references to his brain. At one point, he says his brain has "walked away and is watching" him, another time, that it has "suicided." For Bolden, this debilitation is destructive; he acknowledges this in the image of his brain "tying me up in this chair. Locked inside the frame, boiled down in love and anger into that dynamo that cannot move except in on itself" (CTS, p. 112).

"The slow convolution of the brain" echoes one of the major image patterns of the novel, that of "the tin-bladed fan turning like a giant knife" (CTS, p. 47). "The tin-bladed fan" recalls "the suicide of the hands" associated with "the dream of the wheel over his hands" (CTS, p. 40). In turn, this wheel recalls the image of the wheel Webb uses to describe his attempts to find Bolden and Bolden's friends, whose stories were "like spokes in a rimless wheel ending in air" (CTS, p. 63). The image of the wheel functions structurally as well as metaphorically; it suggests Ondaatje's method in coming to terms with the character of Buddy Bolden and it is analogous to Webb's efforts:

> Webb circled, trying to understand not where Buddy was but what he was doing, quite capable of finding him but taking his time, taking almost two years, entering the character of Bolden through every voice he spoke to. (CTS, p. 63)

This image of circling also recalls Ondaatje's literal circling of the district that was once Bolden's home, as a way of entering his character, as he says, "to think in your brain and body":

> And to the left of Canal are also the various homes of Bolden, still here today, away from the recorded history--the bleak washed out one-storey houses. Phillips, First, Gravier, Tassin's Food Store, taverns open all day but the doors closed tight to keep out heat and sunlight. Circle and wind back and forth in your car and at First and Liberty is a corner house with an overhang roof above the wooden pavement, barber stripes on the posts that hold up the overhang. This is N. Joseph's Shaving Parlor, the barber shop where Buddy Bolden worked. (CTS, p. 10)

The image of circling as dramatized by Webb's detective inquiry into the whereabouts of Buddy is a central and unifying device in the novel; it brings all aspects of Buddy's life and career together. Webb literally and metaphorically wants to trap Buddy to bring him back to his audience while the audience exerts an almost fascistic power over Bolden, trapping him like a spider traps flies. "Spiders" are literally the runners for the local paper, The Cricket, that Bolden puts together; they bring him the local gossip for the paper, particularly gossip concerned with sexual scandals. The image of "flies" like "spiders" is similarly associated with sex: Bolden describes Robin's mouth on his neck as "a fly on me, about three or four of them on me" (CTS, p. 58). Pickett is labelled "The Fly King" after Buddy assaults him in a moment of sexual jealousy because he had once been Nora's lover.

The image of the wheel and the metaphoric implications of Webb's name also suggest the image of the fan "turning like a giant knife." The fan is also a pun that suggests the audience's fascination, specifically exemplified in Crawley's "girl-fan" and later the dancing "girl-fan" who pushes Bolden to his end. Bellocq is the only person who can escape the fan both literally and metaphorically. Bellocq, as Bolden says, scorns what he calls "the giraffes of fame," a scorn that is expressed metaphorically in the image of his height. Bolden says, "he was so short he was the only one who could stretch up and not get hit by the fan" (CTS, p. 91). The image of the fan is the link between the outer pressures of the audience, as represented by the introspective pull of Bellocq and the external pressure of the audience; it also suggests the polarized points of disorder in Bolden's life and his art and his inability to bring the two into a harmony. The image of "the suicide of the hands" suggests a way of liberating Bolden from the stress of these polarities, and the image of Bolden's hand going up into the path of the circling fan, a movement that "happens forever and ever in his memory," is the metaphoric "coming through slaughter." Bolden's premonitions of death are literally dramatized as he blows himself into silence with "Willy Cornish catching him as he fell outward, covering him, seeing the red on the white shirt" (CTS, p. 131). Just as the contradictions of Billy's life are resolved in the "intricate never" of death, so too are they resolved in Buddy's "fall into silence."

Thus, in both The Collected Works and Coming Through Slaughter, a narrative and a metaphorical significance develops through the function of the images as they recall, suggest, and allude to each other. In The Collected Works, Ondaatje structures and unifies the narrative and the poetic sections of the poem by blending and merging incident, sensation, and image to coalesce in the final vision of the legendary hero. In Coming Through Slaughter, the patterning of the images creates a narrative and a metaphorical significance that merge in the function of the poetic image. In effect, the function of the image constitutes both the subject and the form of the novel expanding to include the author himself as its subject.

III

In both The Collected Works of Billy the Kid and Coming Through Slaughter, Ondaatje embodies a personal vision in a form that contains the very meaning of that reality as it is dramatized. Both works point to the poet's awareness that any attempt on the part of the poet to make an extended statement requires more than the lyrical expression of personal perceptions and emotions. Ondaatje objectifies and dramatizes his personal vision (what Scobie refers to as "his poetic")[17] by using the figures of Billy the Kid and Buddy Bolden as a correlative for his aesthetics. Furthermore, in both works the limits of perception are correlated with Ondaatje's act of writing them; in fact, his own personality merges with the personalities of his characters. Thus, he creates an explicit dramatic relation between poet and subject and the implicit identification between subject and author in The Collected Works becomes an explicit one in Coming Through Slaughter.

In The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, the poet acknowledges his difficulty in coming to terms with a complex personality like Billy the Kid's and the impossibility of recreating reality from the stories that have been left behind. There is doubt, on the part of the poet, about the ability of writing to recreate reality; the poet, as opposed to Billy, admits:

> Getting more difficult
> things all over crawling
> in the way
> gotta think through

the wave of ants on him
millions a moving vest up his neck
over his head down his back
leaving a bright skull white smirking (TCW, p. 40)

The real Billy the Kid no longer exists and Ondaatje's presence in the poem corroborates the metaphoric implications of the device of the photograph that suggests the restrictions of recreating truth or reality in a still image. Ondaatje now faces the same problem Billy faced in finding a means to control his energy, in his attempts to shape and control an aesthetic image of Billy the Kid. Ondaatje's voice merges with Billy's when Billy acknowledges his own difficulty in understanding himself:

/while I've been going on
the blood from my wrist
has travelled to my heart
and my fingers touch
this soft blue paper notebook
control a pencil that shifts up and sideways
mapping my thinking going its own way
the light wet glasses drifting on polished wood (TCW, p. 72)

Ondaatje's own meditations on the character of Billy are suggested in the image of "the light wet glasses drifting on polished wood" which connects with Ondaatje's dream, "Last night was dreamed into a bartender/ with an axe I drove into glasses of gin lifted up to be tasted" (TCW, p. 40). The poet's own meditations on memory and perception merge with the gradually accumulating details of Billy's death. It is this self-reflexive impulse within the poem that determines the aesthetic image of Billy the Kid, one composed of history and legend and infused with personal vision. In the aesthetic image of Billy the Kid, the violence, the chaos, and the tension are brought together and resolved by the poet, Ondaatje. The final passage of the poem is the poet speaking; he has spent the night in a hotel room:

> It is now early morning, was a bad night. The hotel room seems large. The morning sun has concentrated all the cigarette smoke so one can see it hanging in pillars or sliding along the roof like amoeba. In the bathroom, I wash the loose nicotene out of my mouth. I smell the smoke still in my shirt. (TCW, p. 105)

In this respect, Coming Through Slaughter is an extension of The Collected Works of Billy the Kid: Ondaatje moves beyond the creation of an aesthetic image to express his personal vision to a dramatization of the creation of the aesthetic itself. Thus, the reader too becomes a participant in the story because he/she is involved in the creation of the poetic process.

Coming Through Slaughter is a summary and a criticism of the compulsively destructive nature of the creative impulse in a certain kind of artist. Buddy Bolden is the artist through whom Ondaatje examines the relationship between creativity and self-destruction, as well as the complex nature of his own creativity. Bolden externalizes and dramatizes the image of "the fall into silence" in the poem "White Dwarfs." The choice of the cornetist makes this image particularly forceful since Bolden's collapse is literally into silence. The identification of the author and his subject is explicit; in fact, the distance between the two collapses in a mirror image when the poet asks, "What was there in that, before I knew your nation your color your age, that made me push my arm forward and spill it through the front of your mirror and clutch myself?" (CTS, p. 134). The "fall into silence" is also figurative since for the writer, to fall into silence is a total negation of writing and art; it therefore constitutes a kind of suicide. The implicit identification and similarity between Ondaatje's and Bolden's art exemplifies, further, the complexity of Ondaatje's form; in essence, it is a form that expresses the anarchy and the chaos of the artist's life by placing the reader within the interior and physical geography of Buddy Bolden. In the merging of author and subject, time and space collapse while chronological and linear ordering of events is replaced by a discontinuous sequence that creates a narrative collage. However, the diversity of the surface form gives way to a unity of effect as the literal and the metaphoric are simultaneously expressed in the function of the poetic image. Coming Through Slaughter is more perfectly integrated and executed than The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, as narrator, subject, and medium are brought to the same imaginative field of interaction.

However, unlike Billy the Kid, there is no apotheosis into legend for Buddy Bolden. In the final image of the novel, Buddy's character merges with Ondaatje's; the black and the white rooms of Buddy's life blend into the author's grey room as he finishes with Buddy's life and ruminates:

> I sit with this room. With the grey walls that darken into corner. And one window with teeth in it. Sit so still you can hear your hair rustle in your shirt. Look away from the window when clouds and other things go by. Thirty-one years old. There are no prizes. (p. 156)

The ending is complex: as figurative images of corners, rooms, and broken windows become the literal room of the author, he suggests there can be no reward for the artist who pushes his art to the point of self-destruction; yet, in this very suggestion exists the alternative suggestion that there may be a prize for the artist who is able to put some kind of order and form on his life and art. In fact, in this specific context, the novel itself becomes the prize.[18]

IV

To create narrative in his novel Coming Through Slaughter, Ondaatje utilizes and refines the techniques of his extended poem The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, techniques that originate in his first extended poem sequence, the man with seven toes. The transition from the man with seven toes to The Collected Works of Billy the Kid and from this to Coming Through Slaughter is to an increasingly dramatic mode and method and to poetic form. the man with seven toes reflects an interest in narrative and the beginning of specific techniques that are developed in The Collected Works and refined in Coming Through Slaughter. In The Collected Works, a narrative and a poetic mode work in relation to each other; they are not antithetical but rather work together to expose and sustain the tension between the private and public character of Billy the Kid. The two modes are integrated through the repetition of images suggesting the dual nature of life and death and the repetitions of objects in a visual field. In Coming Through Slaughter, on the other hand, Ondaatje fragments the narrative line by the enjambment of time, space, and voice. Furthermore, he artistically and aesthetically increases the narrative effect and enhances the novel's meaning by "figuration" or the arrangement of words and images into a shape that complements and echoes the verbal content. The meaning, therefore, occurs in the tension among the individual compositions and their juxtaposed arrangements. Thus, Ondaatje synthesizes the thematic dualities of the work in a formal design achieved and integrated in the closely woven texture of image motifs of fans, circles, stars, rooms, and the interplay of the associations of these images functioning as metaphor. In fact, the metaphoric representation of the images constitutes the subject and the form of the novel. In other words, poetic conventions function as narrative. In this respect, Coming Through Slaughter differs radically from the traditional novel: through the manipulation of the print on the page and in its poetic form, Coming Through Slaughter reenacts the process of the imagination caught by contradictory needs as it expands to include the author as its subject. Finally, it recovers the idea of design or patterning for the expression of its meaning and functions as a poem-novel.

Ondaatje's concerns in both The Collected Works of Billy the Kid and Coming Through Slaughter are similar to those of the poet-novelists Cohen and Atwood; Ondaatje is concerned with the separation between the external reality and an internal one and with the multiple facets of a personality and the problem of fusing them. However, Coming Through Slaughter moves beyond the structure and the form of Beautiful Losers and Surfacing as an expression of duality. As one of the novel's early reviewers aptly put it:

> . . . Coming Through Slaughter represents an imaginative feat of high order: a transcending of cultural and racial and historical barriers into a state of nearly total identification, on both the author's and the reader's part with the subject. . . . But it is undoubtedly Ondaatje's experience as a poet which has liberated him from the tired conventions of the novel and helped him produce a fictional work of such uncompromising existential power.[19]

Coming Through Slaughter is a new landmark in the English Canadian novel: as a novel it blurs the distinctions between poetry and prose and alters the expectations associated with that genre. As well, it establishes the need for a new critical vocabulary to deal with what is, in essence, a hybrid genre.[20]

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION: THE POET-NOVELIST

> "Originality in fiction, rightly understood, is the successful attempt to find new forms that are capable of tapping, once again, the sources of fictional vitality."
>
> Robert Scholes, Fabulation and Metafiction

The phenomenon of the poet's novel is not unique to English-Canadian literature since there is a history of poets who have written novels. The reasons for this are at best speculative; it may be no more than a desire on the part of the poet to reach a larger audience, or, mundanely, to make money. On the other hand, the transition might be rooted in the challenge of mastering a larger form, or the desire for the externality of the novelistic format to explore subjective consciousness more concretely. Certainly, in English-Canadian poetry, there is an interest in the documentary and in extended narrative forms.[1] Until the appearance in the seventies of such novels as Robert Harlow's Scann, Jack Hodgin's The Invention of the World, Dave Godfrey's The New Ancestors, Robert Kroetsch's What the Crow Said, or Audrey Thomas's Blown Figures, and with the notable exception of the experimental prose writings of such writers as B. P. Nichol, George Bowering, or Daphne Marlatt, English writers in general have not generated new forms. That is, there has been little deviation from the conventions, techniques, and styles of the so-called traditional or conventional novel. More recently, however, a host of novels has appeared that are remarkable in their inventiveness and prose styles: Ann Rosenberg's The Bee Book (1981), Helen Weinzweig's Basic Black with Pearls (1980), Geraldine Rahmani's Blue (1981), Keith Harrison's Dead Ends (1981), and Francis Duncan's Dragon Hunt (1982), to name a few, are fictional prose works that do not take on recognizable forms, and in many respects they move closer to poetry in their methods and effect. As well, recent prose works of poets such as George Bowering's A Short Sad Book (1977) or Daphne Marlatt's Zócalo (1977) are unique and inventive prose works that reaffirm the English Canadian novel as a lively and flexible literary form capable of evolutionary changes in style and structure that are indispensable to its continuing vitality.

The interest in innovative fictional forms manifests itself in English Canadian literature in the fiction of two early novels that exist outside the tradition of realism. Elizabeth Smart's By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept and Sheila Watson's The Double Hook daringly depart from the tradition of realism and the methods and conventions of the traditional novel. There is a shift in these novels from conventional novelistic to aesthetic intention. They can also be seen as the literary progenitors of the poet's novels that proliferated in the sixties and seventies. It is significant that the themes of fragmentation and the search for redemption, unification, and community paramount in the poetry of A. M. Klein, Douglas LePan, Leonard Cohen, Margaret Atwood, and Michael Ondaatje receive new technical emphasis, expansion, and form in their novels The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter. What is significant in these novels and in the novels of Smart and Watson is their appropriation of one form by the resources of another; they create novels that maintain the conventions of the novel while they approach the function of a poem.

In essence, the novels of Smart, Watson, Klein, LePan, Cohen, Atwood, and Ondaatje narrow the distinctions between fiction and poetry as they create new fictional (and conversely new poetic) possibilities. Far from being just "poet's novels" or idiosyncratic works expressing a personal vision, they are complex verbal structures that deal with the ambiguities of narrative, the complexity of creating verbal structures, and of finding a language that will express the essence of interior experience. They also raise important aesthetic considerations since the poetic and the narrative mode seem antithetical, or at least in opposition to each other in terms of their orientation and significance. One approaches a poem with the expectation that it is timeless, that it coheres at a symbolic level, and that it expresses a personal attitude largely through tone. The novel, however, is a region where the characters are placed in relation to one another to carry out what can be called a play of meaning: in the narrative mode a teleological structure gains significance by representational and mimetic orientation while each segment gains meaning from its correlation with others to create a certain outcome. In the poetic mode, sound, syntax, the spatial ordering of words, and structuring of thoughts are integral elements of the poem's total effect. This is compounded by the effect of techniques at the poet's disposal, that converge upon the word in order to throw into relief its complex structure and density. Thus, a "poem-novel" suggests a paradox since novels are identified by story-telling and characters in action while poetry suggests intense pictorial patterns evoked through image, symbol, and rhythm.

There is, however, substantial difference between novels that use devices of poetry to depict inner being of character, or to emphasize a novelistic situation (such as Margaret Laurence's A Jest of God or Ernest Buckler's The Mountain and the Valley) and the novels of the poet-novelists Klein, LePan, Cohen, Atwood, and Ondaatje, and the novelist-poets Smart and Watson, who utilize narrative modes to function in the manner of poetry. Their novels, as distinct from those novels that contain poeticization, assume a form that creates narrative progression and characterization through the structural use of poetic device; consequently, they transcend the causal and temporal movement of narrative to a spatial and symbolic form within the framework of fiction. In By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, The Double Hook, The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter, the manipulation of narrative conventions to function poetically is lucid, and is associated with the meaning that the poet wishes to express. In each of these novels, the poet-novelist abandons the narrative line based on contingency and temporality, and with it the organization provided by conventional chronology as the essential structural principle of the novel. Although Smart's By Grand Central Station, LePan's The Deserter, and Atwood's Surfacing move less radically from the form of the conventional novel than do Watson's The Double Hook, Klein's The Second Scroll, Cohen's Beautiful Losers, and Ondaatje's Coming Through Slaughter, there exists, in these novels, a poetic mode for creating narrative.

While By Grand Central Station, The Double Hook, The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter sustain a narrative structure (albeit a tenuous one in Smart's and Cohen's novel), their virtues, like those of poetry, rest in their language and form. There is a close identity between the language in these novels and their form since it is finally the manipulation of poetic device and language that orders the randomness of experience into coherent patterns: their vitality is the result of the fusion of poetic methods and narrative intentions. Yet, far from being in opposition to "realism," their formal inventiveness is the essential condition of a more vital realism; its essence lies not in the representation of life, but in the correlation between subjective experience and the character's personal expression of it. Thus, through the intentional exploitation of the techniques and language of poetry, an enlarged personal perspective emerges in these novels.

Although By Grand Central Station, The Double Hook, The Second Scroll, The Deserter, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter fulfill the expectations of the novel form, they do so in new ways; as a result, they move in new directions and in the process alter the relationship between the text and the reader. The reader needs to bring to these novels the same kind of sensitivity to verbal patterns and alertness to the nuance of words and language as the reader brings to poetry. As Robidoux and Rénaud conclude in their study of the twentieth-century French Canadian poem-novel, the contemporary poem-novel requires a different kind of reading:

> Par suite de l'orientation qu'a prise le roman actuel, le rapport auteur-monde-oeuvre-lecteur est assez différent de ce qu'il était dans les oeuvres traditionnelles. La lecture est devenue autre chose. Dans un bon nombre de cas, pour mener à fond notre exploration et trouver le plaisir esthétique--et la connaissance qu'il comporte,--nous serons obligés de lire une oeuvre au moins deux fois. C'est vrai. Mais, si le roman-poème d'aujourd'hui est une vrai réussite, nous pouvons attester, après expérience faite, que la deuxième lecture est une véritable contemplation et que celle-qui, comme toutes les autres qui peuvent suivre, apportent à l'effort qu'on a fait une récompense inappréciable.[2]

In effect, these novels blur the demarcations between poetry and prose: they manipulate and make harmonious different reader expectations, one from the conventions of the novel and one from the conventions of poetry. In the contemporary poem-novel, the reader's expectations are utilized in such a way that the reading experience is a new one.

In By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, the specific poetic devices of conceit, hyperbole, allusion, and metaphor create a first person "language of love" in tension with the banal and prosaic language of the external world. Language affects the rhapsody and despair of love as the perspective moves outward from a concrete and particular world to an abstract, mythical, and universal world of love and betrayal. The convention of novelistic linearity as governing principle within the novel and the use of the first person point of view together maintain a tenuous structure of chronology. Yet the narrative progresses not through plot but through personal revelation. The emphasis in the novel is on metaphor and metamorphosis as the subjective vision of love and feeling aligns itself through allusion to the heroic ideals of love and in this way transcends the banal, and the concrete and prosaic world. The subjective vision revealed through image, allusion, and metaphor culminates in the apocalyptic vision of "there is no reality but love" even as the world of Grand Central Station intrudes into the archetypal vision of love. The final effect of the novel is of an extended dramatic monologue, an intense, lyrical expression of one mind and soul isolated from the rest of human experience. By Grand Central Station is less closely related to traditional forms of fiction with their emphasis on plot and character than it is to lyric poetry; in technique and in effect, it extends the dimensions of the novel to the function of lyrical poetry.

There is a similar use of language and narrative patterning in

LePan's The Deserter and Atwood's Surfacing, but with different degrees of success. In The Deserter, the subjective consciousness of the central protagonist, Rusty, mirrors the world as he sees it. LePan creates Rusty's inner consciousness through a motif of images as the external world contracts to the subjective point of view and the action of the novel is absorbed and refashioned as imagery. Rusty reenacts the metaphorical implications of "the deserter" and the archetypal search for perfection and personal fulfillment. However, there is a discordant degree of novelistic linearity and plot as the governing principle in The Deserter that fails to work in conjunction with its poetic intentions. Rather than convert the plot or form of narrative through image and metaphor to coalesce with the inner consciousness, and thus welding the physical world to the subjective consciousness, the two work in opposition to each other. In fact, a poetic language and consciousness work in opposition to what is, in fact, a straightforward narrative mode. The narrative fails to merge with the transcendent vision which remains, finally, only partially imposed on a narrative sequence of events.

However, what fails in LePan's The Deserter succeeds in Atwood's Surfacing. Atwood successfully juxtaposes an objective reality and the subjective consciousness of the protagonist and narrator. They merge at the level of the poetic image functioning as metaphor, and coalesce in a transcendent vision where the central duality of the novel between subjective consciousness and an external world results in the restoration of the two halves of a divided psyche into one through a metaphoric metamorphosis into the state of nature. Like The Deserter, Surfacing maintains an external form and plot of narrative as the narrator reenacts the literal implications of "surfacing" as she searches for her father in the concrete and particular world. At the same time, the metaphoric implications of "surfacing" become evident as poetic image and metaphor convert the literal journey into an archetypal quest. Whereas in _By Grand Central Station_, a mythical and contemporary world and a visionary and external reality are juxtaposed and in conflict, in _Surfacing_, the abstract is contained in the concrete and the universal in the particular as a conflicting vision of reality results in _dédoublement_, or the splitting of the personality through two opposing but equally strong forces.

Surfacing not only represents the alienation and isolation of the self as a consequence of repression, it also dramatizes the successive changes the self undergoes in this isolation. It deals thematically with the duality between emotion and reason, or the head and the heart, while it creates a structure whose narrative pattern and form mirror it. Atwood accomplishes this by manipulating the language of the novel as it moves through dramatic (i.e., mimetic) and discursive function to a poetic and emblematic one to manifest the changing states within the first person narrator. Thus, the narrator's quest results in a metaphoric union of the external world and the perceiving consciousness; they become one in the narrator's revelation, "I am a tree leaning." As in Smart's novel, it is not plot but metaphoric revelation and transformation that create the structural patterns within the novel. In _Surfacing_, inner vision is revealed through metaphor and mythic structure in a form that is spare, symbolic, and that refashions the novel to function in the manner of a poem.

In general, _By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept_, _The Deserter_, and _Surfacing_ are concerned with visionary experience; in each novel, an ideal of wholeness and unification is at odds with the prevailing external reality within the novels. In By Grand Central Station, wholeness exists in a visionary ideal of love; in The Deserter and in Surfacing, it exists in the visionary transcendence of chaos and fragmentation that are the result of specific pressures from society as perceived by the narrators. The tension between the perceiving consciousness and the external world is successfully resolved in By Grand Central Station and in Surfacing in a metaphoric vision of transcendence, while in The Deserter, the tension is unresolved and a poetic mode fails to fuse with the narrative conventions within the novel. The titles of the novels are significant; they point to the metaphoric representation and patterning within the novels. Grand Central Station represents the hostile external world as opposed to a heroic world as suggested in the allusion of the title to Babylon. Both "the deserter" and "surfacing" point to a metaphoric as well as a literal representation.

The titles of Watson's The Double Hook, Klein's The Second Scroll, and Cohen's Beautiful Losers point to the symbolic representation and the symbolic implications of "the double hook," "the second scroll," and "beautiful losers." As symbols they contain semi-enclosed worlds of meaning, the essence of whose referential substance is approximated within the specific contexts of the novels, but whose boundaries and possibilities for significance is suggestive and not exhaustive. In Watson's The Double Hook, Klein's The Second Scroll, and Cohen's Beautiful Losers, the rhetorical tools of narrative are translated to complex symbolic function. As well, there is a similar concentration and exploitation of the use of language and a similar method of creating narrative in each novel. And each novel is concerned with redemption:

in The Double Hook, it rests in the community and in the communion of man; in The Second Scroll, it is located in the strength of the Jewish people in the face of their suffering; and, in Beautiful Losers, it is located in a spiritual vision of magic rooted in the techné of contemporary culture.

Watson's The Double Hook remains a landmark in the English Canadian novel in terms of its technique and form. Watson uses techniques of condensation as spare descriptions and concrete images create a kind of symbolic shorthand to fix appearances and suggest the relationships of people in a concrete and particular region. At the same time, she creates a universal world through the motifs of association and allusion. Thematically, the novel creates a sense of dislocation between individuals and community. Ambiguous pronouns, ellipses, incomplete sentences, and unconventional syntax create the sense of dislocation and individual isolation. In turn, the literal movement in the novel from paralysis and death to action and rebirth is created through the interplay and patterning of the concrete and elemental images of nature. The symbolic ramifications of the image motifs reinforce the thematic and structural pattern of stasis and rebirth. Watson's novel is rooted in the concrete image and develops through a series of tightly connected narrative units, yet it articulates an abstract and universal reality in an atemporal and symbolic form. In this respect, the narrative is both experiential and symbolic; Watson creates a form and language that dramatizes physical and psychological rebirth literally and symbolically. The narrative and the poetic mode are tightly integrated: Watson recasts narrative conventions to poetic function and recreates the novel as a poem.

Both Klein and Cohen in The Second Scroll and Beautiful Losers, like Watson, develop symbolic modes of patterning to create narrative but with different degrees of success. Whereas in The Double Hook a symbolic pattern occurs in the function of the narrative, in The Second Scroll a symbolic pattern is superimposed upon a conventional framework of a temporal and linear ordering of events. Klein attempts to fuse the narrator's literal search for his uncle with a symbolic search for Israel. The narrative intentions fail, however, to integrate with the symbolic ones. Klein attempts to fuse the literal and the symbolic by thematically elevating the function of art as a metaphor for miracle, yet as a structuring or integrating device it fails to integrate the two modes. In fact, the narrative is pulled between its dramatic and narrative conventions and its poetic and aesthetic intentions.

In contrast to The Second Scroll, Cohen's Beautiful Losers not only thematically elevates art as a metaphor for miracle, it also dramatizes it. Cohen depicts the decreation of one world in a literal assault on the conventions of plot, character, and linearity. In its place, he recreates a world of magic and miracle. Language is severed from an external world as it creates the internal landscape of the characters and creates a personal myth that transcends the spatial and temporal boundaries imposed by the conventions of plot and character. Cohen deliberately exploits these conventions to dramatize the duality between the spirit and the flesh and its struggle for unification. Cohen's characters exist within a narrative structure and a dramatic framework, yet they also function as symbolic figures of abstract ideas whose various pairings and juxtapositionings produce successive and deepening levels of meaning within the novel. Through the integrity of a network of images, associations, and symbolic connections, Cohen recreates a world of magic and miracle in a densely woven structure of association and allusion connected to a three-part framework that coheres beyond its spatial and temporal boundaries in its symbolic form. Like Watson's The Double Hook, Beautiful Losers recreates the novel as a symbolic poem.

Ondaatje's Coming Through Slaughter constitutes an exemplary poem-novel and differs radically from the conventional novel; in theme and in its techniques it is a companion piece to and a development of his extended narrative poem, The Collected Works of Billy the Kid. Unlike Cohen, who exploits traditional conventions of the novel, Ondaatje literally fragments the narrative line and its linear structure by the enjambment of time, space, and voice to depict the fragmentation of the personality and the separation between the private and the public character. In The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, a narrative strand and a poetic one reflect the thematic duality between the public and the private person: the very form of the novel dramatizes the disintegration of a psyche unable to bring its disparate parts into harmony. In Coming Through Slaughter, narrative progression and characterization occur at the level of the poetic image which functions to dramatize the literal and the metaphoric reenactment of the imagination in conflict with itself. In fact, the metaphoric functioning of the images constitutes the subject and the form of the novel as it enacts the imagination caught by contradictory impulses. The exploration of the creative process also constitutes the novel's interiorized comment on itself as it expands to include the author himself as its subject. By the means of its tightly constructed motifs of imagery, Ondaatje creates a self-reflexive structure that communicates through its formal patterns.

In their novels By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, The Double Hook, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter, Smart, Watson, Cohen, Atwood, and Ondaatje create new modes of narrative in order to transform life, or transcend it by breaking down photographic and representational realism. Thus, one of the primary shifts in the novels of the poet-novelists from the traditional novel is the way experience is created; the emphasis moves from contingency and character to language and form. The "technology" of Cohen's novel and the "figuration" through experimental typography in Watson's and Ondaatje's novels further heighten the power of the language and the significance of the structures.[3]

Generally, while the poet's novels sustain narrative, they do so in new ways. Thus, their real virtue rests in the use of language and in the manipulation of narrative convention to poetic function; in essence, they appropriate one form by the resources of another. The success of the novels By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, The Double Hook, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter, and the failure of The Second Scroll and The Deserter rest in the interplay and integration of a narrative and a poetic mode. In By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept, The Double Hook, Beautiful Losers, Surfacing, and Coming Through Slaughter, the successful appropriation of narrative intent by poetic mode provides new expression and dramatization of experience; they function as specific realizations of poetry, or as the English Canadian poem-novel. Moreover, the innovations in these novels not only extend the formal possibilities of the English-Canadian novel, they also inadvertently influenced a generation of younger writers. Tom Marshall says:

> Perhaps these new developments in the Canadian novel would have occurred even without the participation of the poets, simply because it was time for them after the more traditional achievements of Callaghan, MacLennan, Laurence, Richler, and others and because young Canadian writers were looking with great interest at the fictional experiments of such as Burroughs, Pynchon, and others abroad. But it is significant that poets Cohen and Ondaatje should be so central in this movement in Canada and that the older poets Klein and LePan, with their flawed but gorgeous and boldly baroque fictions, should have helped to point the way. It is significant that this new fiction blossomed in Canada in the dynamic 1960's and 1970's and with certain poets in the vanguard.[4]

Finally, the poet's novels not only extend the fictional possibilities in the English Canadian novel, they also help secure it as a flexible form capable of changes in structure and style that are indispensable to its continuing vitality.

NOTES

Chapter One

[1] In the decades preceding the sixties, English novelists in Canada depended for the most part on the traditional conventions of realism and naturalism as modes for presenting their fictions. See W. H. New, "Fiction," *Literary History of Canada*, Vol. 3, ed. C. F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 233-84. In the fiction of the seventies New says "simple linear narrative was giving way to complex artifice; 'realism' was losing ground to improvisational modes, to science fiction, to the surreal, the absurd, and the consciously contrived mythic and fabular . . ." (p. 234).

[2] Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 161-230, and Jan Mukařovský, "On Poetic Language," *The Word and Verbal Art*, ed. Burbank and Steiner (New Haven: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 1-64.

[3] See especially Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Lemon and Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 3-24; Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1972); Jan Mukařovský, "On Poetic Language," *The Word and Verbal Art: Selected Essays*, ed. Burbank and Steiner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 1-64; and Roman Jacobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," *Style in Language*, ed. T. A. Sebeok (Bloomington, Ind.: The Technology Press of Mass. Inst. of Technology, 1960), pp. 350-77; and Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

[4] Culler, p. 147.

[5] Culler, p. 148.

[6] Culler, p. 164.

[7] Culler, p. 175.

[8] Culler, p. 175.

[9] Culler, pp. 178-79.

[10] Culler, p. 161.

[11] Culler, p. 189.

[12] Culler, p. 190.

[13] Culler, p. 116.

[14] Mukařovský, pp. 2-5.

[15] Mukařovský, p. 4.

[16] Viktor Shklovsky calls this "defamiliarization"; it occurs when the habitual is made to appear strange and it is accomplished primarily through the use of literary device. It is a technique used extensively by Leonard Cohen in *Beautiful Losers* and will be discussed further in relation to that novel.

[17] Mukařovský, "Two Studies of Poetic Designation," *The Word and Verbal Art*, p. 77.

[18] Mukařovský, pp. 12-13. He says this specifically occurs when the standard language of prose takes on strong poetic coloration which occurs in poetic prose and prose poems. The distinction between poetic prose and a prose poem is not always clear, however. Poetic prose is standard language embellished by figurative or poetic language, while prose poems are essentially works employing poetic language, but without the marked end-line breaks of poetry. For an interesting and illuminating discussion on this subject, see Glenn Hughes, *Imagism and the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry* (California: Stanford University Press, 1931).

[19] Novels such as Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood*, Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, or John Hawkes's *The Cannibal* or *Blood Oranges*, for instance, demand a far more reflexive reading than traditional novels.

[20] Ralph Freedman, *The Lyrical Novel: Studies in Herman Hesse, André Gide and Virginia Woolf* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 1.

[21] Freedman, p. 8.

[22] It is interesting that Ian Watt in *The Rise of the Novel* (London: Penguin Books, 1957) says that although realism is the cornerstone of the novel, "the novelist's realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents but the way it presents it" (p. 11).

[23] Réjean Robidoux and André Rénaud, *Le Roman Canadien-français du vingtième siècle* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'université d'Ottawa, 1966), pp. 163-71.

[24] Margot Northey in her study, *The Haunted Wilderness: The Gothic and Grotesque in Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), says that critics of Canadian fiction have also tended to overplay the realistic side of Canadian literature associating its achievements with the growth of realism. Nothey's study attempts to eradicate this.

[25] Robidoux and Rénaud, p. 165.

> What is important to the creative artist is not what reality imposes on him but rather what he dictates to reality. This he does using his own techniques and if necessary he will not hesitate to force or even to torture them: techniques of language and particularly for the novelist, techniques of composition and writing.

[26] Robidoux and Rénaud, pp. 165-67.

[27] Tom Marshall, Harsh and Lovely Land: The Major Canadian Poets and the Making of a Canadian Tradition (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979), pp. 123-62. Also, Northrop Frye in his conclusion to A Literary History of Canada notes "a striking fact about Canadian poetry is the number of poets who have turned to narrative forms" (pp. 842-43).

[28] Earle Birney wrote Turvey (1949) and Down the Long Table (1955); Raymond Souster wrote The Winter of Time (1949) under the pseudonym of Raymond Holmes; and Elizabeth Brewster wrote The Three Sisters (1974).

[29] Marshall, p. xiv. I am indebted to Tom Marshall's ideas on the poet-novelists and grateful that his study further validated my own critical interest on this subject, which at the time of the publication of his book was in embryonic form.

Chapter Two

[1] See especially George Levine's "Realism Reconsidered," The Theory of the Novel: New Essays, ed. John Halperin (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 233-57.

[2] Brigid Brophy, "Preface," By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept (Toronto: Popular Library, 1966), p. 5.

[3] Elizabeth Smart, By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept (Toronto: Popular Library Edition, 1966), p. 44. All further quotations will be taken from this edition and contained in the text in parentheses.

[4] Brophy, p. 7.

[5] Jean Mallinson, "The Figures of Love: Rhetoric in By Grand Central Station I Sat Down and Wept," Essays in Canadian Writing, 10 (Spring, 1978), 110.

[6] Lorraine McMullen, "A Canadian Heloise: Elizabeth Smart and the Feminist Adultery Novel," Atlantis, 4:1 (Autumn, 1978), 76.

[7] Mallinson, p. 108. I am indebted to Mallinson's study for identifying the novel's primary structural pattern.

[8] Mallinson, p. 109.

[9] Mallinson, p. 109.

[10] Mallinson, p. 110.

[11] "Psalm 137," The Holy Bible.

[12] Mallinson, p. 109.

[13] Mallinson, p. 117.

[14] Mallinson, p. 110.

[15] Brophy, pp. 9-10.

[16] I am partly indebted to Michael Brian Oliver's essay, "Elizabeth Smart: Recognition," Essays on Canadian Writing, 12 (Fall, 1978), 106-34. I am also indebted to Elizabeth Smart for allowing me to see a yet unpublished gloss for the sources of the allusions in the novel.

[17] Unlike Smart's novel, The Double Hook has been given its fair due in critical notice. (Presumably this rests on the fact that By Grand Central Station remained underground for twenty years.) Much of the criticism of Watson's novel deals with thematic patterns within the novel or its poetic elements to the exclusion of its narrative elements. Two illuminating discussions which begin to deal with its formal structure are John Moss's seminal discussion in Patterns of Isolation (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974) and Jan Marta's article "Poetic Structures in the Prose Fiction of Sheila Watson," Essays on Canadian Writing, 17 (Spring, 1980), 44-56. Moss points in the right direction when he says:

> Critical analysis should first seek to reveal the structure of its vision before proceeding to extra-contextual resolution of the meaning of its allusory fragments. (p. 169)

Marta's article, however, is problematic: she points to the interaction between the poetry and the prose in the novel, but she confuses the issues by resting her argument on the assertion:

> The epigraph to The Double Hook provides [such] a verse original for the text which elaborates its message. It heads the text graphically, yet as "epigraph" would have been composed after or "in addition"--(The Concise Oxford Dictionary). In that sense, the prose poetry of the novel is pre-poetic. The

> fact that the epigraph constitutes a poetic form of Kip's prose thoughts in the text (p. 61) strengthens the bond between text and epigraph, between prose and poetry. (p. 47)

Douglas Barbour in "A Semi-Bibliographical Note Concerning The Double Hook," Sheila Watson, A Collection: Open Letter, 3:1 (Winter, 1974-75) points out that Watson did not add the epigraph to the text. He says, "the most important change from the original manuscript of The Double Hook is the epigraph on page 7. This was a result of an editorial decision which McClelland and Stewart made without consulting Ms. Watson" (p. 184). Barbour rightly points out:

> Certainly, it cannot be denied that the prominence its appearance as an epigraph has bestowed upon it has made Kip's statement appear far more important to critics of the novel than might have been the case had it existed only as thoughts of a single character at a certain point in the narrative. (p. 184)

[18] Sheila Watson, The Double Hook (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), p. 19. All further quotations will be taken from this edition and contained in parentheses in the text. In prose, the important spaces are those of punctuation, which are related to the sense of the discourse. In verse, the separation of one line from another is visible on the printed page by the irregular right hand margin. This is a crucial aspect of the discourse exploited either to support or contrast with the punctuation according to its sense. Culler says:

> If one takes a piece of banal journalistic prose and sets it down on a page as a lyric poem, surrounded by intimidating margins of silence, the words remain the same but their effects for readers are substantially altered.

See Culler, p. 161.

[19] Leslie Monkman, "Coyote as Trickster in The Double Hook," Canadian Literature, 52 (Spring, 1972), 70. Monkman contends that "Coyote is based upon an ancient and widespread mythic personality serving as for the establishment of a new moral and social order." He says it is Coyote who "has driven the community into silence and submission." Although Coyote is undisputedly an important figure in the novel, Monkman places too much emphasis on him as a figure and allows him a more central position in the novel than can probably be justified. He represents only one aspect of the community, an aspect that is incorporated into a larger more significant pattern.

[20] Jan Marta says:

> . . . by the end of the novel the story is unified, but the poetic techniques thwart the narration at various points throughout. Metaphor, repetition, and the creation of strong images stall the progress of the narrative. (p. 46)

Contrarily, Watson uses metaphor, repetition, and image not to stall the narrative, but rather to create narrative with poetic intent.

Chapter Three

[1] Tom Marshall, Harsh and Lovely Land: The Major Canadian Poets and the Making of a Canadian Tradition (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979), p. 124.

[2] Stephen Scobie, Leonard Cohen (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1978), p. 12.

[3] In this respect, The Second Scroll is modern in its intentions and philosophies. Although Beautiful Losers has been influenced by the modern novel, its aim, intentions, and techniques are essentially postmodern. There is a deliberate assault on form as linearity, causality, and realism are replaced by discontinuity, play, and fantasy. Sandra Djwa places it at the end of a movement, what she calls the symbolist tradition of the black romantic, and epitomizing a fin de siècle aesthetic. See Sandra Djwa, "Leonard Cohen: Black Romantic," Canadian Literature, 34 (Autumn: 1967), 32-42.

[4] Miriam Waddington, A. M. Klein: Studies in Canadian Literature (Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 116-17.

[5] Waddington, p. 117.

[6] Malcolm Ross, "Review of the Second Scroll," A. M. Klein: Critical Views on Canadian Writers, ed. Tom Marshall (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1970), p. 90.

[7] John Matthews, "Abraham Klein and the Problem of Synthesis," Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 1 (Spring, 1965), 150.

[8] Matthews, p. 151.

[9] M. W. Steinberg, "Poet of a Living Past: Technique in Klein's Poetry," Canadian Literature, 25 (Summer: 1965), 17. Steinberg says Klein's tone is quieter in these poems because they are less autobiographical, and therefore achieve greater objectivity and artistic control.

[10] A. M. Klein, The Second Scroll (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1961), p. 41. All further quotations will be taken from this edition and contained in parentheses in the text.

[11] Ross, p. 90.

[12] M. W. Steinberg, "Introduction," *The Second Scroll* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1961), p. x.

[13] Waddington, p. 123.

[14] Tom Marshall, "'Theorems made flesh,' Klein's Poetic Universe," *Canadian Literature*, 25 (Summer, 1965), 51. Marshall says:

> Klein's own art in "Gloss Gimel" involves the creation of a rich prose heightened by effects of sound, rhythm, sensual imagery and metaphor to the power of poetry. . . .

Marshall also refers to Klein's interpretation of the Sistine Chapel's paintings as "an exercise of language as magic. The ceiling is seen as geometry and expressed in language that vividly re-creates its physical presence at the same time as it describes the glory and the dangerous limitations that is the human condition".

[15] For a detailed and illuminating study of the language of "Gloss Gimel," see Zailig Pollock, "The Myth of Exile and Redemption in 'Gloss Gimel,'" *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 4:1 (Winter, 1979), 31.

[16] Marshall, "Theorems made flesh, Klein's Poetic Universe," p. 49.

[17] For a more detailed study of linguistic dislocations in *The Second Scroll*, see Waddington's study of Klein's *The Second Scroll*.

[18] Malcolm Ross, p. 91.

[19] Virginia Woolf, "A Narrow Bridge of Art," *Collected Essays*, vol. 2 (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), p. 224.

[20] Stephen Scobie, *Leonard Cohen* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1978), p. 12. I am indebted to Scobie's full-length study of Cohen's work for many of my own views on *Beautiful Losers*.

[21] Tom Marshall, *Harsh and Lovely Land*, p. 135.

[22] The idea of making "strange" the habitual or the familiar by presenting it in a novel light, or in an unexpected context, is known as "defamiliarization," a term first used by Viktor Shklovsky in "Art as Technique," in *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, trans. Lemon and M. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 5-24. Jan Mukařovský differentiates between standard and literary language and finds poetic language deliberately breaks the rules in order that a given passage be noticed as poetic language. He points out that poetic language is characterized by its function; however, function is not a property but *a mode of utilizing* properties of a given language. Aesthetic effect is the goal of poetic expression; this aesthetic function concentrates attention on the linguistic aesthetic function which concentrates attention on the linguistic sign itself. See especially, Jan Mukařovský,

"Standard Language and Poetic Language," The Word and Verbal Art (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), pp. 1-65.

[23] George Woodcock, "The Song of the Sirens: Reflections on Leonard Cohen," Leonard Cohen: The Artist and His Critics, ed. M. Gnarowski (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976), p. 152.

[24] For a fuller and more explicit study of the influence of Cohen's poetry, see Scobie's study, Leonard Cohen, and Michael Ondaatje's study in Michael Ondaatje, Leonard Cohen (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970).

[25] Leonard Cohen, "You Have the Lovers," The Spice-Box of Earth (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1961), p. 29.

[26] I follow Scobie's logic of referring to the first person narrator as "I" which clarifies "the notion that the composite character in Book Three is 'IF,' a remote human possibility." See Scobie, Leonard Cohen, p. 97.

[27] See Karl Malkoff, Escape from the Self: A Study in Contemporary Poetry and Poetics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 7. Malkoff says:

> If historical time is not inherent in reality, but rather an imposition on it, then temporal sequence is not a necessary means of organizing narrative. If, as from the point of view of eternity all time is copresent, then the poet can juxtapose any events without any concern but the effect of the juxtaposition. The very notion of plot, which is after all a preoccupation with cause and effect relationships, is suspect when deprived of its sequential underpinnings. Similarly, spatial organization . . . becomes the prototype for the imposition of logical categories upon experience. In place of abstraction is the concrete; in place of temporal and logical organizations is the simple act of juxtaposition . . . which opens up new worlds.

See also Roger Shattuck's comments on juxtapositioning in "The Art of Stillness," The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant-Garde in France 1885 to World War One (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), pp. 326-52.

[28] Leonard Cohen, Beautiful Losers (New York: Bantam, 1966), p. 225. All subsequent quotations will be taken from this edition and their page numbers will be contained in parentheses in the text.

[29] Malkoff says:

> The loss of faith in the coherent, consistent personality, leads to the adoption of the mask as a legitimate means of self-expression, . . . the use of a variety of masks simultaneously, or at least in rapid succession within the same work makes possible a stance that is neither objective nor subjective. (p. 33)

[30] In this respect, one could say the characters suggest a "figural" or "typological" interpretation, which Eric Auerbach in Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, trans. W. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), says:

> . . . establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfills the first. The two poles of a figure are separated in time, but both, being real events or persons, are within temporality. (p. 64)

[31] Dennis Lee, in Savage Fields (Toronto: Anansi, 1977), sees the third section of Beautiful Losers as a failure:

> . . . it fails to find a satisfactory voice and form. We do not watch the central consciousness traipsing through its ostensibly happy ending with devastating irony; we watch it drift off into sophomoric allegory and warmed-over scatology. (p. 94)

Lee's reading of Beautiful Losers is based on an idiosyncratic (if not brilliant) reading of the novel in which he applies his preconceived notion of metaphoric cosmologies. Because the third section does not fit into the scheme of his "psychomachia," he feels this section fails. Lee argues that the destruction of F.'s personality in Book Two "undercuts" the validity of the world view presented in Book One. I agree with Scobie, who argues that the stripping away of all aspects of F.'s mastery in Book Two is the necessary process by which alone he can enter the ecstatic reality of Book Three (p. 121). I would further argue that Lee's reading fails to consider the formalistic aspects of the novel; it is precisely the voice and the structural patterns created in the first two books that achieve an appropriate and successful resolution in the concluding section.

[32] F. M. Macri in an article, "Beautiful Losers and the Canadian Experience," The Journal of Commonwealth Literature, 8:1 (1973), suggests:

> Each woman symbolizes an extreme that cancels out the other. The two men, like the women, are at opposite ends to each other. They delineate an external conflict, as the women denote an internal one. (p. 92)

[33] Desmond Pacey, "Cohen as Literary Phenomena," Leonard Cohen: The Artist and His Critics, ed. Gnarowski (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976). Pacey notes:

> The greatest significance of the Isis cult, which developed in Egypt in the seventeenth century B.C. and gradually spread throughout the whole Mediterranean world, lay in her role of Universal Mother and her agency of affecting immortality of the soul and renewal of life. She included in herself the virtues of all other goddesses, and she offered to her devotees forgiveness, purgation, communion and regeneration. Her

> mythological role in piercing together the fragments of her husband Osiris symbolized her miraculous healing power. (p. 88)

[34] Pacey translates this, "I am Isis born, of all things, both what is and what shall be, and no mortal has ever lifted my robe" (p. 88). Scobie's translation reads, "I am Isis, I am all things which have been, and are, and shall be and no mortal has lifted my robe" (p. 142).

[35] Lee nicely clarifies this in Savage Fields:

> In subsequent arcane and occult traditions, the 'veil of Isis' was often understood as appearance or illusion, which had to be dissolved by the initiate. The enlightenment which followed was sometimes figured as a revelation of the goddess's vagina. (p. 70)

[36] Despite Catharine's rejection of her sexuality, it seems, she, too, participates. During the fuck-cure, "Catharine had lain among them and left with them unnoticed" (p. 167). Cohen's italics suggest his own emphasis on this point.

[37] Dennis Lee says if a novice persists with his "koan" he may eventually, in sheer frustration, abandon the delusory categories of his intellect, at which point he achieves enlightenment. Macri suggests the whole novel is a koan: at first it appears nonsensical, only to prove illuminating upon further consideration.

[38] Lee, p. 82.

[39] Pacey, p. 90.

[40] Douglas Barbour, "Down With History: Some Notes Towards an Understanding of Beautiful Losers," Leonard Cohen, ed. M. Gnarowski, p. 145.

[41] Pacey, p. 90.

Chapter Four

[1] W. C. Lougheed, "The Defeat of Egoism: A Critique of The Deserter," Queen's Quarterly, 72 (Autumn: 1965), 552-62.

[2] See Joseph Campbell, The Hero With a Thousand Faces (New York: Meridian Books, 1956). This will be further discussed in relation to Margaret Atwood's Surfacing.

[3] Douglas LePan, The Deserter (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964), p. 19. All further quotations will be taken from this edition and

contained in the text by parentheses.

[4] Lougheed, p. 552.

[5] F. W. Watt, "Introduction," The Deserter, p. x.

[6] Lougheed suggests that The Deserter is the story of Paradise Lost and Rusty's quest to regain it. He points out that much of the imagery in the novel has "Edenic overtones."

[7] In many respects this "crystal sundial" is similar to Bernard's "crystal ball" or "globe of life" in Virginia Woolf's The Waves.

[8] Watt says:

> [LePan sifts] the whole rich life of his novel through one lively and subtle sensibility, sufficiently close to the author's to permit the full strength of his own perceptions, thoughts, and imaginings, sufficiently objectified to encourage detachment and the play of genuine dialectic, if not drama. (p. xi)

I contend this is only partially true and LePan's failure to maintain a consistent detachment in the voice of his central character is one of the novel's major flaws.

[9] Again, this technique is similar to that of Woolf's in The Waves, which is much more consistently effective in its stylization of the multiple consciousnesses as in:

> "I see a ring," said Bernard, "hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light."
> "I see a slab of pale yellow," said Susan, "spreading away until it meets a purple stripe."
> "I hear a sound," said Rhoda . . . .

See Virginia Woolf, The Waves (London: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 6.

[10] Tom Marshall, Harsh and Lovely Land, p. 132.

[11] Marshall, p. 134.

[12] Carol P. Christ, "Margaret Atwood: The Surfacing of Women's Spiritual Quest and Vision," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 2:2 (Winter, 1976), 340. Christ points out (I think accurately) that the narrator's quest in Surfacing is for redemption. "Redemption" is the deliverance from sin, and the narrator in Surfacing has sinned against her own flesh.

[13] Margaret Atwood, Surfacing (Markham: Paperjacks Ltd., 1972), p. 107. All further quotations will be taken from this edition and contained in the text in parentheses.

[14] George Woodcock, "Poet as Novelist," The Canadian Novel in the Twentieth Century (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), p. 315.

[15] Sherrill Grace, Violent Duality (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1980), p. 79.

[16] Although Atwood's novels are all different, they do tend to raise the same ethical, social, and psychological questions and they share thematic and stylistic similarities with the poetry. Linda Hutcheon in "From Poetic to Narrative Structures: The Novels of Margaret Atwood," Margaret Atwood: Language, Text and System, eds. Sherrill Grace and Lorraine Weir (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), pp. 17-33, argues that the ordering patterns of her lyrics become increasingly integrated into a more complex and more specifically narrative technique. I have restricted my analysis to Surfacing because of the specific techniques she uses in the novel and also because it is the natural culmination and synthesis of a number of motifs that are prevalent in Atwood's work from her earliest poems. In Surfacing, as in her poetry, Atwood dramatizes in her language a transcendent vision.

[17] Gilean Ladousse, "Some Aspects of the Theme of Metamorphosis in Margaret Atwood's Poetry," Etudes canadiennes/Canadian Studies, 2 (1976), 72.

[18] Ladousse, p. 72.

[19] Grace, p. 65.

[20] See Janis Watkin, "Extended Forms: The Use of Myth in Modern Canadian Poetry" (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1981). Watkin argues there is a popularity in English Canadian poetry of single volumes which use myth as a structural device. She says:

> Modern and contemporary English Canadian poets have chosen titles meant to indicate something of the process, topic, or definition which individual poems in the volume jointly explore. The unification of the collection is indicated by the ordering of the poems; the poet hopes this ordering will allow the reader to consider the individual poems as interacting parts of the whole, and ultimately to regard each volume as a single extended poem. . . .
>
> . . . .
>
> The methods of myth also assist in the creation of an extended form. Because myth blurs the distinctions between the inside and the outside, fantasy and reality, linear time and transcendent time, the poet can express relationships between and within these categories in direct rather than parallel ways. That is, the poet adopts as his technique this blurring of the usual boundaries between and within categories; the poles of a category are no longer rationally and lineally linked together. Thus while the poet consciously arranges his poems in a logical and linear order which moves to a specific conclusion, his

adoption of the methods of myth permits the exploration of relationships within that linear structure in non-parallel ways. (pp. 17-18)

[21] Grace, p. 65.

[22] Prose-poems in Circe/Mud Poems, pp. 49, 52, 61, 64, 68.

[23] In this respect, Sherrill Grace notes a similarity with Sheila Watson's The Double Hook, which she says "presents a myth of duplicity" in Canadian soil.

[24] Atwood's interest in fiction and fictional techniques which are evident in her early poems and in The Journals of Susanna Moodie are formalized in her first novel, The Edible Woman (1967). This novel is primarily concerned with social comment made through the poetic eye and, like her later novel, Lady Oracle (1976), is written in the comic and satiric mode. Both The Edible Woman and Surfacing are direct indictments against a plastic consumer-oriented society, but where The Edible Woman explores this in a satiric vein, Surfacing achieves a mythic and symbolic enlargement of Atwood's personal statement as it transcends cultural and social boundaries. Atwood's latest novel, Bodily Harm (1982) also explores commercialism where vivid and concrete images of consumerism suggest a commercialized sensitivity. Life Before Man (1981), on the other hand, is concerned with the shaping effects of social backgrounds. Although each novel reveals the poet's sharp eye and a propensity for using images to convey meaning, it is Surfacing which seems to me to be the most powerful and least flawed of her novels. Atwood's newest work, Murder in the Dark (1983), is subtitled "Short Fictions and Prose Poems." In this work, Atwood amalgamates the poetic and the narrative mode in brief pieces that work to capture meaning, impressions, and sensations.

[25] Grace says, "Duality is neither negative nor ambivalent. Daulity, whether of structure or metaphor, is not the same as polarity. But the human tendency to polarize experience, to affirm one perspective while denying the other, is deeply ingrained . . ." (p. 132). The major theme of Atwood's Two-Headed Poems (1978) emphasizes this continuing theme in her work. In this book of poems, Atwood portrays duality as the contemporary national dilemma.

[26] The two poems that anticipate this function of landscape are "Journey into the Interior" in Procedures for the Underground, and "What Happened" in The Animals in that Country. Douglas Barbour has pointed out to me that Atwood's poem "Procedures for Underground" provides a gloss on Surfacing in the same way Cohen's poem "You Have the Lovers" and LePan's poem "Image of Silences" provide glosses for their novels Beautiful Losers and The Deserter.

[27] This pattern is evident in Atwood's work as early as Double Persephone (1961). Grace sees the narrator as Persephone, a figure who "must not only experience the underworld before returning to her Mother, but her descent also leads to knowledge that she must henceforth embody both worlds; never again can she inhabit one or the other. This

acceptance of duality, basic to the myth, informs each level of the narrative" (p. 105).

[28] Sherrill Grace finds the shift in tense in the novel perplexing and finds it violates the temporal sequence of the narrative. However, she suggests this shift may be used to emphasize the narrator's self-alienation and the mental journey into the past. I agree with this suggestion and would add that the shift in tense prepares for and then underlines the narrator's transformation in the final section of the novel where she will destroy (symbolically) all spatial and temporal boundaries imposed on a person.

[29] Carol P. Christ, "Margaret Atwood: The Surfacing of Women's Spiritual Quest and Vision," p. 323.

[30] This is a point of dispute among Atwood's many critics. The conclusion of Surfacing is certainly a qualified affirmation of life; she may not know how she will manage, but she has decided to return with Joe to the city, and no longer be a victim. Moreover, she has come to realize that she can no longer abdicate her responsibility either from society or from history. As Jerome Rosenberg suggests:

> . . . it is Hawthorne's unpardonable sin of deliberate alienation from the rest of humanity that Atwood's heroine must avoid--not to remove sin from oneself by perceiving oneself as better than the rest of humanity, but to realize one's inevitable complicity in humanity's corruption--to take responsibility. . . .

See Jerome Rosenberg, "Woman as Everywoman in Atwood's Surfacing: Some observations on the End of the Novel," Studies in Canadian Literature, 3:1 (Winter, 1978), 129.

[31] Here I am in agreement with Rosenberg's conclusions and his criticism of Rosemary Sullivan's opinion that Atwood's conclusion to her novel is a failure because there is an implicit evasion in the attempt to disengage herself from history, or from her own inheritance of the human condition. See Rosemary Sullivan, "Breaking the Circle," Malahat Review, 41 (1977), 30-41.

[32] Octavio Paz in The Bow and the Lyre, trans. Ruth Simms (London: University of Texas, 1967), sheds light on this matter when he says:

> The distance between the word and the object--which is, precisely, that which obliges each word to become a metaphor of the thing it designates--is the result of another distance: as soon as man acquired consciousness of himself. The word is not identical to the reality it names because man and things--and more deeply, between man and his being--consciousness of himself intervenes. The word is a bridge by which man tries to traverse the distance that separates him from external reality. But that

> distance is a part of human nature. To obliterate it, man must renounce his humanity, either by returning to the natural world, or by transcending the limitations that his condition imposes on him. (p. 26)

[33] Grace, p. 102.

[34] Grace acknowledges in Violent Duality that "various ways have been used to describe the visionary events of Part III in Surfacing, from psychological to religious, from Lang to Eliade and 'rite de passage' myth." Grace adds, "more likely Atwood is drawing from Ojibway concept of homology and transformation" (p. 106). I find John Moss's comments the most useful here; he says the narrator "penetrates into primeval and prenatal realities . . . through an unusual use of words and image that . . . bears a closer relationship to poetry than prose." See John Moss, Sex and Violence in the Canadian Novel (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), p. 127.

[35] In her study of Atwood's poetry, Pat Sillars notes that in her poetry, "the language of poetry, imagistic and associative, has been fashioned to imitate the rhythms of discursive language, or the cadences of common speech have been transformed into highly patterned poetic language." See Pat Sillars, "Power Impinging: Hearing Atwood's Vision," Studies in Canadian Literature, 4:1 (Winter, 1979), 66.

[36] For a detailed study of Surfacing as an archetypal quest see Josie Campbell, "The Woman as Hero in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing," Mosaic, 11 (Spring, 1978), 17-28. Campbell argues that the mythic pattern is important because the protagonist/hero is now a woman. She feels that the structure is imposed upon the narrative, but I would argue that it evolves organically in the descent and surfacing motif.

[37] Campbell suggests Atwood is making use of the Demeter-Koré myth in this act: the finding of Koré by Demeter expresses the experience of a rite de passage from girlhood to womanhood through rape, victimization, death and sacrifice by an impersonal god or male who remains alien. Campbell says the important aspect of this myth is the resurrected Koré who can no longer be abducted, or in this case victimized. Kore is resurrected by her mother; in turn, she will resurrect her own child.

[38] Rosenberg, "Woman as Everyman," p. 131.

Chapter Five

[1] "Narrative collage" is an appropriate term used by Annie Dillard in Living By Fiction (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), p. 21. She adapts the term from the techniques used by the modernists to shatter the narrative line in terms of their treatment of time and space.

[2] Michael Ondaatje, "White Dwarfs," There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning To Do: Selected Poems 1963-1978 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), p. 68.

[3] Ondaatje, the man with seven toes (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1969), p. 9.

[4] Ondaatje, the man with seven toes, p. 41.

[5] For a fuller and more specific analysis of this point, see Sam Solecki's article, "Point Blank: Narrative in Michael Ondaatje's the man with seven toes," Canadian Poetry, 6 (Spring/Summer), 17.

[6] Solecki, p. 17. The resolution of the dualities in the later works exists within the form or the structure of the work; there is no thematic resolution. In the conclusions to both the later works, there is a sense of open-endedness since the legend of Billy the Kid and Buddy Bolden lives on.

[7] Solecki, p. 23.

[8] Stephen Scobie in an article, "Coming Through Slaughter: Fictional Magnets and Spider's Webbs," Essays on Canadian Writing, 12 (Fall, 1978), 5-22, suggests the superficial distinctions between poetry and prose in terms of the way the words are set on the page are of minor importance. He says that although Coming Through Slaughter is almost entirely prose and is generally discussed and accepted as a novel with "a novelistic story-line and a group of characters," he, nevertheless, remains uneasy about calling it "a novel in the conventional sense. Like Leonard Cohen's Beautiful Losers (a book to which it bears more than a passing resemblance) it is a novel in which the real action takes place at the level of the poetic image" (pp. 5-6).

[9] Annie Dillard in Living By Fiction calls The Collected Works of Billy the Kid a novel which includes "not only prose narration in many voices and tenses, but also photographs ironic and sincere, and blank spaces, interviews and poems" (p. 22).

[10] For a fuller account of sources in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, see Stephen Scobie's article "Two Authors in Search of a Character," Canadian Literature, 54 (Autumn, 1972), 37-55. For an account of sources in Coming Through Slaughter, see Ondaatje's credits at the end of the novel.

[11] Michael Ondaatje, The Collected Works of Billy the Kid (Toronto: Anansi, 1970), p. 20. All further quotations will be taken from this edition and contained in parentheses in the text.

[12] Michael Ondaatje, Coming Through Slaughter (Toronto: Anansi, 1976), p. 63. All further quotations will be taken from this edition and contained in parentheses in the text.

[13] For a valuable and interesting essay on composition in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, see Anne Blott, "'Stories to Finish': The Collected Works of Billy the Kid," Studies in Canadian Literature, 2.2 (Summer, 1977), 188-202.

[14] Scobie's suggestion that there might be a link between Iberville and "the Prophet Ibis," a Louisiana bird, which Nora's mother, Mrs. Bass, sees as paranoid, is not too far-fetched with respect to the "Liberty-Iberville connect."

[15] J. M. Kertzer cogently argues that death itself is a paradox in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid. He argues that the poem is built on paradoxes which can be seen in the function of the imagery that "blends, warps, and grows ambiguous as the primary contrast between life and death gives way to the paradoxical union of the two." See J. M. Kertzer, "On Death and Dying: The Collected Works of Billy the Kid," English Studies in Canada, 1 (Spring, 1975), 86-96.

[16] The image of the star also suggests the "great stars" in The Collected Works of Billy the Kid. Both these images are repetitions of those "burned-out stars" in the poem "White Dwarfs."

[17] Stephen Scobie, p. 5.

[18] There is an ironical yet valid justification here since Ondaatje's novel won the Books in Canada first novel award.

[19] Roy MacSkimming, "The Good Jazz," Canadian Literature, 73 (Summer, 1977), 92-94.

[20] Ondaatje has had two works published since the publication of Coming Through Slaughter: Running in the Family (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982) and The Tin Roof (Lantzville: Island Writing Series, 1983). Running in the Family is autobiographical prose which attempts to come to terms with the author's eccentric family. The Tin Roof is an extended poem sequence.

Chapter Six

[1] See Janis Watkin, "The Extended Form in Canadian Literature" (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of Alberta, 1982).

[2] Robidoux and Rénaud, p. 170.

> As a result of the new direction the contemporary novel has taken, the relationship between author-world-literature-reader is quite different from what it was in traditional literature. Reading has become something else. In many cases, making a

thorough exploration and finding aesthetic pleasure--and the knowledge that goes with it--actually require us to read the novel at least twice. However, if the contemporary poem-novel is successful, and we confirm this from our experience, the second reading is really a process of contemplation, and like any other readings that may follow, it repays our efforts with invaluable rewards.

[3] The Double Hook, Beautiful Losers, and Coming Through Slaughter specifically raise important questions with respect to the modern and the post-modern novel in the development of the English Canadian novel. Certainly these novels exist in the tradition of post-modern since in each novel a familiar pattern of fictional order is broken down, or "deconstructed."

[4] Tom Marshall, Harsh and Lovely Land, p. 169.

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